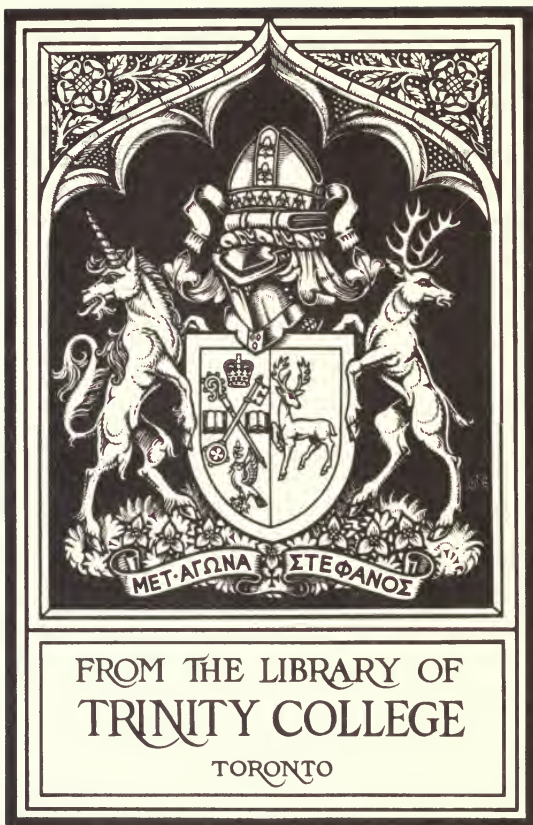


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TORONTO

SERMONS

FOR

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

BY THE LATE

REV. JOHN KEBLE,

AUTHOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN YEAR."

SOLD BY

JAMES PARKER AND CO. OXFORD,
AND 377, STRAND, LONDON.

1876.

PRINTED BY THE SOCIETY OF THE HOLY TRINITY,
HOLY ROOD, OXFORD.

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SERMON I.

PREPARATION FOR THE HOLY WEEK.

PALM SUNDAY.

S. LUKE xviii. 34.

“They understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”

AND yet our Lord's sayings were plain enough in themselves, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of Man: for He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again.” The words, surely, however wonderful, are not hard to be understood; and yet we are told, both on this and on other like occasions, that they were quite beyond the comprehension of the disciples. They understood not His saying, “^aand were afraid to ask Him.” Though He spoke never so openly, they had still to question among themselves, what such sayings on His part should mean.

Now in this ignorance on the part of the Apostles,

^a S. Mark ix. 32.

which seems to us so strange, we may, on consideration, find something very like what takes place in our own hearts and minds. It is, in a kind of type and mystery, the shadow and type of our sad but too common ignorance concerning the Humiliation and Passion of our Lord. The disciples, not having as yet received the gift of the Holy Ghost, could not understand, could not put their minds to, our Saviour's prophecies about His own sufferings. The natural man cannot understand the Cross. That Christ the Son of God should reign and be a great King, that all kings should fall down before Him and all nations do Him service, that by Him, in some mysterious way, a great deliverance should take place; such truths as these they readily adopted, although the words in which they were uttered were not one whit plainer than those which foretold His shame, and pain, and death. They kept close to the childish notions in which they had been brought up, of a King on his throne, glittering with gold and precious stones, who should make them all rich and great in this world, and cause the land to overflow with milk and honey. When He told them of His affliction and death, or of taking up the Cross, or of not being ministered unto but ministering, the words indeed were spoken out expressly, but they could not bear the plain meaning, and therefore they could not understand it. They turned away their minds from it, saying, "Of course, we are not to understand *this*; what to understand, we do not know exactly; but *this* cannot be the meaning; the words cannot mean what they say; there must be some figure of speech, some parable, some deep mysterious turn in them."

Thus they got rid of the most direct and evident prophecies and precepts of Jesus Christ. They turned their minds away from thinking of the Cross, and accordingly, when it came, they were unprepared for it, and, for awhile, they all forsook Him and fled. All were offended because of Him that night, because none of them had quite properly taken the full and direct warning which He gave.

They could not comprehend His words about the Cross, before it was really lifted up ; but what is yet more remarkable, neither do we Christians, most of us, comprehend those words, however early we have been taught them, however carefully we are put in mind of them, however exactly we say them with our lips. It is not only that the *doctrine* of the Cross is too deep for us ; it is not only, that we do not lay to heart our own sinfulness, and our Lord's atonement. I am not now speaking of that kind of ignorance, but of Christians not really understanding, not laying to heart, what they really read and hear of the outward visible sufferings of our gracious Redeemer. We do not put our minds to it ; we do not silently draw a kind of picture of it in our memories ; we do not, as is sometimes said, *realize* the Passion of our Lord. Why we are so dull on this point more than others, and how that great evil may be cured or prevented, I will now in some measure, try to explain.

First of all, we know well, that it is hard, if not impossible, to enter thoroughly into any sufferings of others. People who are in affliction and pain, feel this very deeply themselves. They say continually, "No tongue can tell, it is quite unaccountable what I suffer." Every man's heart is, of course, in most

respects a secret to every other man. God keeps His own eye upon it, but gives no power that we know of, to any of His creatures to search it out. Every man's heart is a secret to his neighbour, but especially in respect of sufferings. To enter truly into other men's pain and trouble, we must really *love* them. There is no other way. No learning, nor study, nor experience, nor skill, will answer the purpose; but true, real, self-denying love for our neighbour will help us to feel for him in a remarkable way. This is how mothers and nurses enter into the sufferings of little children, feel for them, know what they want, and are very often able to supply it. It is because they *love* them; and without some special love for the afflicted, none of us can thoroughly enter into or understand his affliction. We may know a little of it, enough to make us pity, enough perhaps to make us endeavour to relieve it, in some small measure; but without true and cordial love, nature will teach us, having done thus much, to turn away our eyes and minds from the misery, as though dwelling much on it were but paining ourselves to no purpose. Many a one, more charitable than that unhappy rich man in the parable, would have relieved Lazarus, but would not have liked to see him with his sores every day at his gate. I say it again; truly to enter into the calamities of our brethren, and put ourselves in their place, is a great and rare fruit of charity, and cannot be, at least, cannot spread far, or last long, without some special love.

And if this is the case of all sufferings, it is more especially true with regard to the sufferings of our

Lord on the Cross. If we find it hard to know and understand what the poor and sick endure among whom we live, how are we to realize to ourselves the pain, and shame, and trouble, and agony, of Him Who was hanged on a tree in Jerusalem, so far away, so many years before we were born? We shall never think on it as we ought, except we begin to have some true love of that Divine Sufferer in our hearts. To fix our eyes in earnest upon the Cross, we want love and faith too; faith, to represent to our hearts, as true and real, the things which happened at Jerusalem so long ago; love, to hinder us from withdrawing our mind's eye from things so painful and distressing. It is want of faith and love, which hinders us from true and thorough contemplation of the sufferings of our Divine Saviour, even as the saints' overflowing faith and love have ever caused them to give themselves up to steady meditation on those sufferings; to realize them in every way, and make them their own.

The disciples at that time wanted faith and love, out of a kind of childishness. As children cannot look on to distress and illness, and when they hear of it, do not know what it means, so the twelve could not at that time know what our Lord meant, when He spoke to them of being ill-used and crucified. But what is *our* reason? Why cannot *we* think steadily on His Passion? Alas! there are too many reasons and too evident.

Too many of us are wanting in seriousness altogether. Suppose an Angel, at a certain season, at this holy season of Passion-tide, were to go round to every house, knock at every person's door, and say, "This

is the solemn time ; this is different from all other weeks in the year : the Cross is lifted up among you ; come round it and adore. Put away the strange gods, the earthly thoughts and pursuits, from among you ; and force yourself now, for a time at least, to follow your Lord in heart whithersoever He goeth. Watch Him from morning to night, on His way into Jerusalem, during His nightly devotions in the Mount of Olives, discoursing in the temple, foretelling the end of the world, at His Last Supper, in the garden of His agony, bound before His persecutors, bearing His Cross to Calvary, lifted up upon it between earth and heaven. Fix the eyes of your heart upon Him for these days of His Passion, at least ; do not willingly let them wander." Suppose, I say, one of God's Angels were to go round from house to house at the beginning of the Holy Week, with such a warning as this ; how would he find himself received ? I will not now speak of those houses in which such a call would be clearly out of place, because they who dwell there have been all their lives long so entirely taken up with other things, that they do not even understand what is meant when they are called on to look to the Cross. I will not suppose this Angel's voice falling on ears altogether unholy and profane : let us imagine those who hear it to be in some respects serious persons ; yet will the meaning of the voice be more or less hid from them ; they will not know the things which are spoken, they will not understand the call to keep Passion Week, except they have been on their guard against such an error as I am now going to mention.

If we have been leading soft and delicate lives,

indulging ourselves without scruple in all delights and amusements which were not plainly sinful, how can it be possible for us, then, to taste at all with our Lord the bitterness of the Cross? We have read of one who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, and was satisfied with such delights, and sought nothing better; and the consequence was, he could have no feeling for Lazarus, who laid at his gate full of sores. And if you have been living like him, not perhaps in purple and fine linen, but just pleasing yourself in the enjoyment of such earthly and bodily pleasures as your condition afforded, depend upon it, you cannot have any true sense of Christ's sufferings. You may take good words, Church and Scripture words, in your mouth, confessing His Cross; yet somehow it will be hid from you. You may kneel down and try to say good prayers; yet somehow, while you are at your prayers, the thoughts and cares connected with these your earthly pleasures will come in and take off your mind from your Saviour. When you set yourself to meditate on the Cross, you will hardly know how to begin. It will seem to you like learning a lesson in a strange language, of which you have not learned the first and simplest sounds. All your notion of it will probably be, that it is something very bitter, which Christ endured for your sake to save you from suffering, and that you ought to be very thankful to Him for it; but in the mean time, not denying yourself, you will be inwardly unable to enter into the spirit of His sufferings. You will not really feel the power of His Cross at all. On the other hand, as soon as you begin, humbly and secretly, to deny yourself for

His sake, to give up pleasures, to subdue importunate desires, to bear with troublesome, disagreeable people, to forgive affronts and wrongs immediately, to recollect His presence and your own sins continually; that moment His Cross and kingdom comes to you, not in word only, but in power; that moment you begin to know Him, and the fellowship of His sufferings. Therefore the Holy Church, no doubt by Divine guidance, has ever ordained that there should be a Lent before Passion Week; a time of denying and mortifying our earthly members, before the time of giving ourselves up to meditation upon Christ's sufferings. For want of such holy discipline, no doubt this Holy Week finds us in general but ill-prepared to receive the blessing prepared for us in it. How can we expect the Cross of our Saviour to enter suddenly into our hearts, and fill up all our thoughts and desires during this one week, when, up to the very last hour of the former week, we have been filling them without scruple as full as they could hold of this world's vanities? It cannot be, my brethren; it is in vain to look for it. If we will not try to punish ourselves, with Christ and for Christ, in Lent, we must give up the hope of suffering with Him in Passion Week.

But as I will hope that no well-meaning Christian among us has passed his Lent altogether without *some* kind of wish and effort to deny himself, I would now earnestly advise one and all to take, without delay, the mournful privilege which our dying Redeemer offers them. I would say, Accept with all your heart that gracious invitation which the Saviour of your souls now gives you. "Behold, and see if

there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow^b ;” “^cLook unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ;” “Take up My Cross, and follow Me.” And, by way of some little beginning, let us set ourselves this rule : to have our Lord and His sufferings as much as we can before our minds during this whole week, so that, as often as we are led to think of the necessary businesses and refreshments of life, we may presently awake and recollect ourselves, and say in our hearts, “What have I to do with the world, I, whose Lord is even now in that severe course of suffering for my sins?” Let us, on each day of the Holy Week, follow Him in our minds, and silently draw an inward picture of Him in some one moment of His Passion. Let us try to think it well over in the mornings, and get it strong before our mind’s eye, that we fly back to it, and gaze upon it in silence and humility, as often as we have any leisure during the day. Why, think you, did the Holy Ghost, by the Evangelists, set forth so particularly the circumstances of our Lord’s Passion? Surely they are written for our remembrance : we were to contemplate His Divine image, first preparing for His Cross, then in the act of being fastened to it, then lifted up upon it, then dying on it by degrees, then hanging dead upon it, then taken down from it and laid in the grave. We know exactly how many wounds there were, and where they were inflicted ; how many words He spoke, and on what occasions ; who were by Him, and how they behaved ; at what hour He was brought before Pilate ; when condemned, when crucified, when He cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. There

^b Lam. i. 12.^c Is. xlv. 22.

is not one of us, that has ever heard or read the Gospels for this week with any attention, but has a sort of picture in his mind, more or less distinct, of the crown of thorns, the purple robe, the soldiers spitting and bowing the knee in mockery, the Cross laid upon our Lord, His sacred and adorable feet and hands so cruelly fastened to it, the offering vinegar, the bowing of His head, the loud cry, the yielding up the ghost, the soldier piercing His side, His burial by Joseph. Now, what imaginations we have of all these unspeakable things, let them not go, let us dwell upon them ; we cannot study them too earnestly, provided we do so with deep reverence, remembering that this heavenly Lamb, so cruelly slain, is our Lord, our King, our Saviour, and our God ; the God whom all the Angels worship. Keeping this in mind, let us really try, this one week of our lives, to have Christ and His Cross constantly before us. We cannot tell how much good such holy pictures may do us. The Church puts them before us on purpose ; let them not pass away unimproved. So may we come to Good Friday, and to the Holy Communion on Easter Day, with minds every way better prepared, humbler, more loving, more penitent. So may we learn by degrees to “^d endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.” So may we be practised in the true love of the Cross, embrace it more and more with both hands earnestly, and by its healing power become at last fit for heaven.

^d 2 Tim. ii. 3.

SERMON II.

CHRIST'S OWN PREPARATION FOR HIS PASSION.

PALM SUNDAY.

S. LUKE XXI. 37.

*“ In the day-time He was teaching in the Temple ;
and at night He went out, and abode in the mount
that is called the Mount of Olives.”*

THIS is the account set down by the Holy Ghost of the manner in which our Blessed Lord spent what may be called His Passion Week ; the days, during which He stayed in Jerusalem after He had come up to His last Passover, waiting for His hour to come ; preparing, in a manner, for His Death and Resurrection. He came into the city, as we read in S. John, six days before the Passover, that is, on the Sunday in that last week. On this very day, as it were, He rode into the Holy City, as the Prophets had foretold, on a colt the foal of an ass. That day, He spent teaching in the temple, looking into the condition of all things there, and working miracles ; and when it was now even-tide, “^a He went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there :” most likely near the house of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Now Bethany was on the Mount of Olives. When, therefore, S. Luke tells us that our Saviour went out on

^a S. Matt. xxi. 17.

those evenings to the Mount of Olives, he tells us the same as S. Matthew, where he writes, that on the first of those evenings our Lord went out to pass the night in Bethany.

As He did on the Sunday of that week, so He did on all the following days, until the Friday: the morning and daylight hours He spent in the temple, teaching, instructing the multitude and His disciples, and warning His malicious enemies, who were all the while watching Him; and the nights He spent on the Mount of Olives: in what sort of employment, we may guess, both from what we read of Him before, and from what followed near the end of the week.

We read of Him in the early part of the Gospel, when He first began to preach, that after a very hard day's work of healing men's bodies and instructing their souls, rising up "^ba great while before day," He departed and went "into a solitary place," and was there praying when His disciples came to look for Him. Again, after the miracle of the loaves, "^cHe departed again into a mountain Himself alone," and was there until the fourth watch of the night^d, that is, three in the morning. Another time, after much disputing with His enemies, and long teaching in the temple, the Pharisees went "^eevery man to his own house:" they had houses to go to, with plenty of ease and all sorts of comforts awaiting them. But "^fJesus went unto the Mount of Olives." He chose not to have any home where He might lay His head. After His days had been days of charity, He would have His nights nights of devotion.

^b S. Mark i. 35.

^c S. John vi. 15.

^d S. Matt. xiv. 25.

^e S. John vii. 53.

^f Ib. viii. 1.

So it was during His ministry, and so it was, still more, when that ministry was drawing to an end. The very day before His Passion, having first eaten the Passover with His disciples, and given them those blessed instructions which we read in S. John, He went out into a garden, the Garden of Gethsemane, on the slope of the Mount of Olives, whither oftentimes He had been used to resort with His disciples; and there He was praying, when the Jews and Judas came upon Him.

Our Lord's preparation then for His sufferings lay in these two things: active practical duties by day, and earnest devotion and meditation by night. Now that, whereby He prepared Himself for the Cross itself, and the grave, and all His mysterious sufferings, the same must be the best preparation for His people also, when they are celebrating the memory and likeness of those sufferings. For what is the purpose of the Holy Church Universal in appointing this particular time of year, during which for so many days we are to follow Him step by step, through all the stages of His bitter Passion first, and then of His triumphant victory over death? Of course, what is meant is, that we, by the help of God's Holy Spirit, should make what happened to Him as present to us, and as near to us, as ever we can; that we should, as S. Paul says, "have the mind of Christ;" that, when Good Friday comes, we should spend that solemn day with some faint touch at least of His heavenly patience, charity, and self-denial; that the Cross should not be lifted up for us in vain, but that we should go out of ourselves, forget and renounce ourselves, and turn all our faith and hope and love towards our Divine

and only Saviour, as Mary Magdalene did, and the other holy women, when they stood by beholding His death. This, I say, is part at least of the Church's purpose in having such a day as Good Friday, and such a week as Passion Week, to humble and chasten our minds, by way of preparation for that awful day.

Now, if we are to come as near as we can, frail feeble sinners as we are, to the mind of our dying Lord on the day of His death, it stands by reason that we should attend to, and in our measure imitate and practise, His proceedings while He was preparing for that day. If we would spend Good Friday with Him crucified, we shall do well to spend Passion Week with Him in the temple, and on the Mount of Olives.

For as we learned of our Lord Himself last Sunday, it is vain to expect any right understanding of any thing that God says or does, except one is so changed as to "be of God's." There must be a preparation of heart and mind; else the word spoken in our ears, the wonders wrought in our sight, will fail to come home to us. And if this be the case in respect of all Divine institutions, much more of so great a thing as the Sacrifice of His Son, which is the salvation of the whole world. There will be no true receiving the doctrine of the Cross, without a heavenly change in heart and mind, disposing us practically to take up the Cross. And, as was said, it should seem from our Lord's own way of spending His time when His death was drawing near, that this will depend on two things: diligence in the duty of our calling, and

heavenly contemplation. Let us try to understand how each of these may help us to enter into the spirit of the merciful, yet most fearful Sacrifice, the memory of which will again be set forth before us, if God spare our lives a week longer.

And, first, as to the effect of regular dutiful obedience, in making us better able to feel our Lord's death as we ought: consider what it is that we mean by dutifulness. We mean, when people do a thing because they know it is such as God will approve, without considering whether it is or is not pleasant or profitable to themselves. Thus we call a servant dutiful, when he does a good part by his master in sight and out of sight alike; and the same with regard to a son and his father, a king and his subject, and to any other person who is accountable to one higher than himself. We call him dutiful, when he forgets himself, when he goes out of himself entirely, and looks only to the one question, What his employer has a right to expect of him?

He then who in his ordinary life strives to be dutiful towards God, is so far striving to forget himself. And when such an one shall come to contemplate the Blessed Jesus on the Cross, his heart will secretly swell within him in a way unthought-of before. He will say, or rather he will feel, to himself, "Here is, indeed, in unspeakable perfection, that which I have been faintly wishing and longing to practise: here is dutifulness taught in a way which the tongue of man can never express, nor his heart conceive worthily." How so? One may answer in Divine words, the words of one of the proper Psalms appointed for Good Friday. There the Prophet, in our Saviour's person,

says^h, “Lo, I come;” I come down from heaven to earth; I take on Me the form of a servant; I stoop down under the Cross, and afterwards offer Myself up on it; “in the volume of the Book it is written of Me:” the Old Testament prophecies have pointed it out long before, that I should “fulfil Thy will, O my God: I am content to do it; yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Surely these words, taken as the words of Him Who is God as well as Man, are the highest expression of dutifulness that can be imagined; answering to those many sayings of our Lord, wherein He at the same time declared Himself One with the Father, and yet spoke as if in a kind of subordination to Him: such as, “ⁱThe Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise;” and again, “^jThe Father hath not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him.” What these words say, the sight of our Lord on the Cross shewed forth in action; it was the perfection of all duty, utter forgetfulness of self, as looking only to that will, which He prayed might be done in preference to His own. “^kHe became *obedient* unto death, even the death of the Cross.” Whoever then studies to live in obedience, is so far preparing himself to die with our Lord, if need be, on the Cross; much more, to keep devoutly the solemn memory of His death.

But, again, whoever would do his duty thoroughly, no matter in what station or condition of life, must often endure things positively unpleasant to him, and oftener deny himself what he would greatly enjoy.

^h Ps. xl. 9, 10. ⁱ S. John v. 19. ^j Ib. viii. 29. ^k Phil. ii. 8.

If you strive regularly to do a good day's work, you will have often to go on when tired, sometimes in pain: to move, when you would be glad to sit still; to persevere, when you would be glad to leave off; to endure aching and soreness, and pangs of body and mind, when, if it were not for the whispers of duty and conscience within, you might be enjoying yourself, or at least remain quite at ease.

Now every little burthen of this kind, that a man has the courage to lay on himself, will help him in some small measure to understand what Scripture says of the Cross of Christ. When we feel how hard it is, especially at first beginning, to endure, for duty's sake, but a very small degree of pain or anguish that we might free ourselves of, and how continually we are tempted, while so acting, to take out our own reward in praising ourselves for it; then we may begin faintly and dimly to imagine, what that love must be, which, for no joy of its own, but only the joy of saving sinners, "endured the cross, despising the shame:" endured such pangs as the Psalms and Prophets describe^m: "I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart also in the midst of My body is even like melting wax; My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaveth to My gums. I was a derision to all My people, and their song all the day. He hath filled Me with bitterness; He hath made Me drunken with wormwood. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the

¹ Heb. xii. 2.

^m Ps. xxii. 14, 15. Lam. iii. 14, 15. i. 12.

day of His fierce anger." I say, if a man does but lie awake one night with bodily pain and anguish, he may well begin to have other and truer thoughts of such Scriptures as these, than he had before.

And thus resolutely doing our duty, from the very pain which it sometimes brings with it, trains the soul to embrace the Cross. Who more likely to turn towards their suffering Saviour, with all their heart and soul, than those who are dutifully and affectionately waiting on the sick-bed of some friend or kinsman, which requires more than ordinary self-denial? Persevere, then, in the work of your calling, pleasant or unpleasant, for His sake Who called you, as our Lord was daily teaching in the temple; it will be half, one may say the first half, of your preparation for rightly drawing near the Cross of Christ.

But let us not forget that this preparation comprehends another thing equally necessary. There must be contemplation as well as action; devotional thoughts as well as dutiful obedience. Who can doubt, that our Blessed Lord's nights spent in the Mount of Olives had, at least, as much to do with His hour which was at hand, as His days of teaching and miracles in Jerusalem and in the temple? It will not do, then, to imagine, as one may sometimes hear people affirming, in a tone not quite so reverential as one should wish, that we are sufficiently prepared for receiving Christ, if we be honest, and punctual, and kind, in our daily calling. It is not a safe way of talking, which some have, that "they are not afraid to die, for they bear no man any ill-will, nor have done any body harm, neither is the man living who has any reason to count them enemies." This

is not, I say, a safe way of talking, though it is a very common one. For what does it, in fact, come to? It comes to this: that there is no special need of devotion; that we have no occasion to exercise ourselves in withdrawing from the world, in order to have direct intercourse with God in prayer and deep thought and heavenly contemplation; which, if you consider it, is as much as to say, that a man is just as likely to keep the way to Heaven and come thither at last, though he never look that way.

But unaccountable as this sounds, when we put it into words, it is in deed, and in real life, one of the most common of all errors, and especially necessary to be guarded against in our country, and in our time. For it somehow appears, that we English people, of all people in the world, are most apt to make an idol of what we call common sense, and to look at every thing as those who are called men of business; to enquire after the visible apparent use of things; to be impatient of what we do not at once understand; and to think that all must be right enough, if people's lives and practices towards one another be right. Our spirit, left to itself, is too like that of the rich young man, who having, as he thought, done all his duty to his neighbour from his youth up, asked of our Lord, without fear, "What lack I yet?" This, we have reason to think, is the disposition of our countrymen; they always want something solid, and dislike what seems fanciful and unreal; they are too much for sight against Faith, even in religious and spiritual things; and therefore devotion, properly so called, worshipping God, lifting

^a S. Matt. xix. 20.

up their hearts to Him in public and in private, making leisure for prayer and holy and penitential exercises, keeping holy days and times, whether of humiliation or of festival joy; all these things we Englishmen are apt to think slightly of, because we do not perceive at once that outward fruit of them, which we are accustomed to look for in every thing.

Is there any one here, who does not know people who think little of public worship, because experience tells them, as they suppose, that a man may be good and useful without it? And can it be reasonably doubted, that many go on to despise private prayer also, because they do not see why it should be necessary to a person doing his duty to his acquaintance, and being useful in his generation? Now I do not say it is so bad, yet it may be a part of this same indevout temper, to despise and neglect, I say wilfully to despise and neglect, any ordinance of the Church, any sort of direct devotion, which she recommends to her children. Fasting, for example, is one sort of private devotion, on which the Church has given very particular directions; as any one may see in the calendar at the beginning of the Prayer Book. Yet how many persons are there, who pass by these directions altogether, making no difference at all between fast-days and feast-days! No doubt, most people do so in ignorance; their attention has not been ever really drawn to the subject: but whoever first began this inattention, whoever, being reminded, still goes on in it, have we not some reason to fear that it may be in them a symptom of the profane spirit of the world, to which all days and all times are alike? What would such an one have said to our Lord's

devotions, that last week of His life, by night in the Mount of Olives? Would he not have thought it a pity, that working so hard as He did, and having so much to endure, He should weary Himself out still more with watching and prayer all night? But we see that He, to Whom only the right way is perfectly known, He took the way of self-denial and holy contemplation; He added watching and devotional exercises, by night, and when alone, to the pastoral and charitable works, which engaged Him by day, and among others.

Add to this the reflection, Who our Blessed Lord was: God Incarnate; so united, even as Man, to the most High and Eternal Godhead, that He could not be for a moment left alone. Yet even He accounted it necessary, at set times and places, and in a solemn manner, to keep up this intercourse of devotion with His heavenly Father. He Who of all men, one should think, could least need it, He has set the strictest example of intense prayer and retired meditation, as the true way of preparing oneself for hard duties and conflicts in life, and for the last unknown hour.

I wish we thought of this more than we do. Here is our Master rising up to His prayers a great while before day, and we lie on in sloth and negligence. Here is our Master on the Mount of Olives, after a hard day's work in the temple, and we, perhaps, fancying ourselves over-tired, come in and throw ourselves on our beds without one serious prayer or recollection. Here is our Master kneeling and falling prostrate, and we sit carelessly, and perhaps look about us, while the Church is offering up the most solemn prayers.

You are deceived, my brethren, if you imagine that these are mere outward things, making no difference if the heart be right. Why are they set down as part of our Lord's behaviour, if they make no difference in God's sight? How can they be mere outward things, if we do them humbly because we read that He did so? If place, posture, time, self-denial, helped Him in His devotions; are we better than He (God forgive the word), that we should think ourselves above needing such help? If even He, Who was One with the Father, used so much serious contemplation, took so much time, as it were, to recollect Himself, when His death was coming on; can we imagine we are duly preparing for our death, if we will not find or make leisure for calm thought and religious examination of ourselves, before our prayers, and after we have done praying?

I say, preparing for our death; for, indeed, that is the true light in which we are to regard all the services of this holy week. Good Friday, as it is the remembrance of our Lord's dying moments, so it is, to a faithful Christian, a sort of rehearsal and foretaste of his own departure. For such a person knows that his death cannot be a happy one, except by partaking of the virtue of his Lord's death. It must be offered up as a sort of sacrifice in union with the only true Sacrifice, once for all made on the Cross. Our Lord, in His dying pains, did in a mysterious and heavenly manner bear the death-pangs of all His people, made them His own, and sanctified them; so that His death is in a manner their death, and theirs, His. This being so, how can we better prepare to keep the memorial of His death, than by such holy

and charitable ways, as we would wish to be found in, when we have to meet our own?

Be not, then, slothful, on this holy and blessed week; make haste to be reconciled, you who are out of charity; deny yourselves, you who live at your ease; recollect yourselves, you who are careless in your prayers; and remember your Saviour, while you have time, both His warning and His practice; His warning in the verse before, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man;" His practice, described in the text, "In the day-time He was teaching in the temple: and at night He went out, and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives."

SERMON III.

PRESSING ONWARD TO THE CROSS.

PALM SUNDAY.

S. LUKE xii. 50.

“I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished !”

Most persons know something of the feeling of suspense and anxious curiosity, when they are looking forward to any thing very serious, any thing which they think will greatly affect their happiness ; especially when they have been a long time kept in expectation of it. The hours, days, months, years of waiting appear to them more and more tedious ; they are more and more alive and awake with curiosity, to know what sort of a thing it will be when present, which now at a distance occupies their mind so much.

No one will wonder that this should be the case, when the thing we look on to is pleasant ; but there is a feeling of the same sort of impatience, even though it be ever so painful. As those who are standing on some very high place, when they turn giddy, are half-tempted to cast themselves down, so persons on the edge of any great and terrible change are more or less inclined, oftentimes, to plunge themselves into it. Any thing, to their irritated minds,

appears better than doubt and delay : they seem to themselves to know the worst, and not to care how soon it comes.

Now our Blessed Lord, as one of us in all things, sin only excepted, had His share of this feeling, so far as it is natural and innocent ; at least, so we may understand His saying in the text. He is speaking of the effects of His coming, the sacred fire which would be kindled in the whole world by His Holy Spirit, the unhappy division and warfare which His Gospel, though meant to be a Gospel of peace, should every where produce. "I am come to send fire on the earth ; and what will I, if it be already kindled ? . . . Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth ? I tell you, Nay ; but rather division ^a."

With these expectations of what should befall His Church, our Lord mingles also the sure and certain thought, which lay deep in His Divine Soul, of His own sufferings. "I have a baptism to be baptized with ;" that is, "A flood of pain and fear and anguish, both of Soul and Body, is preparing in the counsels of God to overwhelm Me : I came into the world on purpose to endure it, and it is never out of My thoughts ; rather it occupies them more and more, and the time seems longer and longer, as I draw nearer the great trial and Agony, the bloody Sweat, the Cross and Passion."

He knew how bitter it would be to flesh and blood ; knew it far better than any of the children of men, even though they were inspired Prophets, ever knew of the pain they should suffer ; for He was the Creator both of His own Soul and Body, and of the very Cross

^a S. Luke xii. 49. 51.

on which they were to be tormented. None could know, as He, what He should suffer when He entered on the work. Yet here you see what His mind was. Instead of shrinking from it, He was the more eager to begin: so high, so courageous was His love to us, and His zeal for His Father's glory; so complete the condescension with which He entered into this and all other innocent feelings of ours.

He seems in the very next chapter to express the same kind of feeling, when told by the Pharisees of Herod's purpose to kill Him. “^bGo ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.” As if He should say, “Herod need not trouble himself about slaying Me; I know well when it will be My time to be perfected; to be fully offered up in sacrifice for the sins of My people; but it cannot be just yet; ‘I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following;’ I must enter into Jerusalem; for it is a law of God's providence, that a Prophet can hardly perish any where else. And all this must take some little time.”

Thus our Saviour expresses Himself, somewhat in the same way as an ordinary child of Adam might, when he found himself drawing near the great object of his whole life. And there are many other signs, in S. Luke's Gospel particularly, how His thoughts and wishes were continually turning that one way. “^cHe stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem:” there was no thought of drawing back on account of the sufferings which He foresaw there; rather, like a true and brave warrior, who would “tread the winepress

^b S. Luke xiii. 32.

^c Ib. ix. 51.

alone," He went on calmly and resolutely towards His great end, the saving of us by suffering. The expectation of it ran through all His sayings and doings, especially in whatever fell from Him about taking up the Cross: that famous saying, which to His disciples at the time must have seemed far beyond their understanding, but which they would understand when they came in sight of our Lord's own Cross. The Agony in the garden, that deep mysterious trial, was in this way but the completion and perfection of what He had been enduring inwardly, during the whole time of His ministry. He was straitened, as He had been before, only far more intensely, till His great work should be accomplished.

To the children of this world the time seems long, until they have tried such and such a project, by which they expect to mend their fortunes; till they meet such and such a friend, from whom they have been long separated; till they receive such a favour or such a benefit, on which they have set their hearts. But to the Son of God the time seemed long, until He should be betrayed by His friend, seized by His enemies, bound, spitted on, shamefully entreated, scourged, nailed to the Cross, and hanged on it; till His Soul should be "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," so as to force great drops of bloody sweat from His holy and suffering Body; nay, till He should have to endure that unknown grief, which caused Him to cry out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He felt as it were straitened and uneasy till these things were accomplished: so great was His love of souls, so unspeakable His anxiety to deliver a lost world from eternal ruin, and

to pay down the price of His Blood for the Church, which He was to redeem and unite to Himself for ever.

In His mighty works and manifestations of power, He had continually been looking on to this. On His first coming to the Baptist, to be set apart for His great sacrifice, He used words which most likely have some reference to His future sufferings: “^dThus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness;” “thus,” that is, “by being plunged in afflictions, which are to come round about Me like water, and then rising again out of them in the power of the quickening Spirit.” This seems to be part of the meaning of those deep and mysterious words.

And when He began to work miracles, it would seem as if the secret silent feeling of His future sufferings accompanied Him all along, and caused Him, in a wonderful way, already to bear the burthen of those whom He came to relieve. Somewhat of this sort S. Matthew appears to signify, where he says that our Saviour, by healing the sick, fulfilled what Isaiah had written concerning Him, “^e Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” Accordingly, in many of His miracles He shewed tokens of a heavy heart. When about to heal one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, He sighed, and looking up to heaven, said, Be opened^f. He wept by the grave of Lazarus, though He was just on the point of raising him. And when setting out into Judæa to perform that miracle, He spake words which shewed how straitened He was in heart, how earnest until His hour came. His

^d S. Matt. iii. 15.

^e Ib. viii. 17.

^f S. Mark vii. 34.

disciples had objected to His going again into Judæa, because the Jews of late had sought to stone Him. His answer was, “^g Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not.” As much as to say, “My time is measured, and it is short, and I cannot afford to lose any of it:” or, as He had before warned the same disciples about the man born blind; “^h I must work the work of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.”

Thus, as He in His merciful and infinite condescension limited Himself as His creatures are limited, He Who is the God of Eternity limited Himself to a certain time, so He set us an example, who are all of us so limited, which way our thoughts should tend. Men are apt to think they shall die contented, when they have satisfied this or that wish, when they have done this or that work, when they have made so much money, when they have obtained such and such an advantage for those whom they leave behind them; and that favourite object, whatever it be, haunts them night and day, and colours in a manner almost all their thoughts and words. So were our blessed Master’s sayings tinged all over with the longing expectation of the Cross. And when the Cross itself came, His disciples, and we after them, might see the meaning of many, very many words and deeds, which could not possibly be understood at the first.

Now as our Lord in every thing else is the Head and Pattern of His saints, and as their mind is the mind of Christ; so also in this point of looking forward anxiously to the Cross, longing for the hour to

^g S. John xi. 9.

^h Ib. ix. 4.

come, when they may take it up for His sake, and for the sake of their brethren. As in other respects, so in this, the saints shew themselves new-created after the image and likeness of their Master. Thus S. Peter, having had a promise from Christ, signifying what death he should die, carried the thought of it about with him wherever he went, as he shews by his way of writing when that hour was drawing near. “ⁱ I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.”

S. Paul, too, more especially, whom we are directed to follow as he followed Christ, shews himself in many places entirely possessed with this divine and glorious desire, of sacrificing himself more and more entirely to the glory of his Lord and the salvation of his brethren. Thus, to the Philippians, writing from prison, and in more or less danger of death, he uses the very same words as our Blessed Lord in the text: “^j I am in a strait,” I am straitened, “betwixt two” things, “having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” Whether he was then to live or die, he was in a kind of strait or agony, wondering how he might do most and best for the great cause in which he was engaged. It took up his whole mind, and left no room at all for the ordinary cares and pleasures of life, which we too commonly allow ourselves to be carried away with.

In another place he tells us what it was, which

ⁱ 2 S. Pet. i. 13, 14.

^j Phil. i. 23, 24.

caused this thought to prevail over all others in his mind. “^kThe love of Christ,” he says, “constraineth us:” it fills our very heart, and makes it in a manner ache with longing to have right thoughts of Him, and behave ourselves worthily of Him; it occupies us entirely, and carries us quite away: “because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead, and He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.”

Thus, as Christ was straitened, until His painful Baptism of blood and sorrow was accomplished, so S. Paul, and all who resemble him, are straitened, until they can find some way of giving themselves up more entirely, body and soul, life and death, to Him Who thought nothing at all, not even heavenly and divine glory, too dear to give up for them.

And this feeling, which S. Paul’s writings express, agrees perfectly with his history, as we read it in the Acts of the Apostles. He is continually journeying, teaching, preaching; he gives himself no rest in body or in mind; he is “¹pressed,” that is, straitened, “in spirit,” declaring to all that Jesus is Christ. So deep is his feeling of the mercy which he had received, in being not only baptized but ordained, not only forgiven but taken into the special service of Jesus Christ, that he knows not how he can ever do enough, how he can ever be sufficiently active in declaring to his brethren the message with which he is entrusted.

Then as his own departure drew nigh, hear how he welcomes it, how his whole heart is set upon it:

^k 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

¹ Acts xviii. 5.

“^m I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom.” You see, the thought of what is coming takes him up entirely; he has neither ear, eye, nor mind for such matters as will come to an end with this short life. He has “a baptism to be baptized with,” a martyr’s death to die for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s, and he is straitened, pressed in spirit, full of expectation and suspense, until this great and happy work, which he knows God has to do with him, be accomplished.

Now, we are to be followers of S. Paul, as he was of Christ. We, too, have all “a baptism to be baptized with:” we have our appointed portion of cares and sufferings to go through, our sorrows, purifying or penitential, as we have wandered less or more from the happy innocence, to which God called us in Baptism. If we have nothing else to go through, that at least awaits us, which is the common lot of all men. Be our paths in life what they may, they must every one take us through the valley of the shadow of death. We *must* come into those deep waters, so that the floods will run over us.

If, then, we will enter, in some faint measure, into the mind of Christ and of His most faithful servants, must we not endeavour to turn our hearts, habitually and continually, to that which we know must soon come? Must we not very often set ourselves to consider our own death, and what will come after?

As it is, when we lie awake on our beds, or when

we are journeying alone, or when in any other way our thoughts are left free, we are too apt to have something or other of this world, with the thought of which our spirits are pressed, and we spend ourselves with vain longings to have it accomplished, and imaginings how it will be with us, after such and such a change, painful or pleasant, shall have taken place. But when we have learned to attend to the warnings of Holy Scripture, our thoughts and imaginations in solitude will be very different. Then, as we lie awake, or as we travel alone, we shall be carried on in our minds to that time, when our place on earth will know us no more; when the things which are now present, and which in spite of ourselves lay so fast hold of us, will have passed away as if they had never been; and the future, which is now so hard to fix our hearts on, will have become present, never to pass away. Then, instead of representing to ourselves this or that friend on earth, whom we expect to see at such and such a time, we shall try to set before our mind's eye Him Whom we are sure to see before very long, Jesus Christ on His Throne of Judgement. Instead of picturing in our fancy this or that place which we hope some time to see, we shall let our contemplations wander on into those regions of joy and woe, in one or other of which, we know, we must soon have a home for ever. Instead of planning restlessly and wearily what we have to do next, and what after that, in some pursuit which happens just now to be interesting, we shall be straitened and anxious, thinking how little we have done yet, and what we may and ought to do, for Christ and the Church's sake: we shall be

contriving how to lay out ourselves more entirely, to sacrifice something more to Him, Who never yet overlooked the smallest act of true devotion and self-denial.

Persons who are really subduing their selfish feelings, and fixing their hearts on these great things, will find by degrees that the world is too strait for them; and the thought of death, awful as it must always be, will come into their minds not unaccompanied with a sort of thrilling hope, a wondering into what new and high regions they will find themselves let loose, when the spirit takes leave of the body; and still more when both body and spirit, by the grace of Him Who died and rose again, shall be called together from the grave to their eternal state. By degrees these real and unspeakable things will take up more and more room in their minds; they will mingle more and more with their daily life and conversation: wherever they go, they will bear about with them the remembrance of death, judgement, eternity, heaven, and hell: whatsoever their hand findeth to do for God and Christ, they will do it with all their might and without delay, knowing that “ⁿ there is no device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither” they are going. They will find themselves less dejected and disappointed, when their earthly matters turn out untowardly; less excited and lifted up, when they seem to be prospering and having their own way, and when things prove such as they had judged them to be.

Surely, after all that can be said in praise of gaiety and lightness of heart, and enjoying ourselves while

ⁿ Eccles. ix. 10.

we can, this "mind of Christ," this serious temper, is what every one at the bottom of his heart knows to be the only reasonable and right one. We know, every one of us, that the great overwhelming Day will very soon be here, and that when it comes, *he* will have least to regret, who has thought most of it beforehand, and mixed it most up with all his other thoughts. Surely each one of these holy seasons, such as Lent, and Passion-week, and Easter, which shall have passed away unimproved by us in meditations such as these, will then rise up in judgement against us; all serious occasions, whether of joy or sorrow, whether the solemn times of the Church or our own household matters, will add weight to our burthen, if we have not tried to make them serious.

And well, on the other hand, will it be for those who, with the faithful Apostle, shall have surrendered themselves to the full influence of those great thoughts, which being enough to fill the Mind of the Son of God Himself, are yet graciously put by Him within reach of the meanest of His disciples, according to their measure. Well for those who, knowing that God has a great work of penitence and reformation to do in them, feel restless and straitened and uneasy till it be accomplished! Well for those who study and toil and lie awake, contriving not about their own profit or pleasure, but how best to save their souls, do good to their neighbours, and glorify their Saviour!

SERMON IV.

DANGER OF TRUSTING TO RELIGIOUS EMOTIONS.

PALM SUNDAY.

S. JOHN xiii. 37.

“Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake.”

TRUE love cannot bear the thought of the beloved object suffering: it shrinks and starts back from every warning of the kind, and slowly and hardly reconciles itself to it: slowly and hardly permits itself to be assured even by the voice of true faith, that the beloved must endure so much of pain and fear and desolation, before he can enter into his rest and glory. Of this, S. Peter was an example, when, as I shewed you last Sunday, he rebuked our Lord for speaking of His Passion, and declared that no such thing should befall Him. But it is also a mark of the same true loving heart, that when it is once clear and certain that the beloved must suffer, it longs to suffer with him: it cannot be contented without bearing its share of the burthen. True genuine love and affection, even if it can do no good, delights in accompanying him, towards whom it is felt, even through the worst that may happen. If

kept at a distance, it follows him in its thoughts: will deny itself ease and enjoyment, to be the more like him. As we read of that faithful and loyal servant of David, that he would not eat and drink and rest quietly in his bed, while the Ark of God and all David's soldiers were in the field, enduring hardness. Or as Ruth, that pattern of true affection, when she refused to forsake her mother-in-law: "a Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." Our very hearts swell within us, as we read such noble and affectionate words, sealed as they are with God's own approbation and blessing: and we feel that in her place we should wish to be like-minded, and that we could not help loving and admiring any who resembled her.

But in proportion as these tokens of love engage and win our hearts, we have need to be very careful that we suffer not the Evil spirit to pervert our good feelings: as he will be sure to do if we will let him, either by carrying us on to spend ourselves in *mere* feeling, or by silently accustoming us to put on the show of it when we have it not. And now that the Holy Church invites us to draw near to our Lord in His Passion, the time when of all others a Christian would wish to feel most deeply, it seems no unfit season for warning ourselves, and praying God, that we may stand on our guard against these tempta-

^a Ruth i. 16, 17.

tions: which otherwise will too probably rob our Holy Week of its blessing.

S. Peter's history may help us here, as it did last week. We have learned from our Lord's first severe rebuke of him, not to hide our eyes, nor draw back from His sufferings. Let us of the same Divine Master now learn another lesson; not too lightly to flatter ourselves that we are prepared to suffer with Him.

For so it was, that when Jesus Christ, sitting at His last Supper with His disciples, had told them plainly of His departure, "Whither I go, ye cannot come;" and afterwards, on S. Peter's eager enquiry, had repeated the same saying more particularly to him, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards," S. Peter, feeling in his heart, as if he had quite got over that old shrinking from his Lord's sufferings, made this earnest profession; "Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." He had no doubt, no misgiving about it: he felt quite sure at that moment, that nothing could make him disloyal to his Master. But his Master knew better, and told him at once, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice." So speaking to His dearly beloved disciple, Christ seems in a manner to speak to us, and say, "Perhaps as you read or hear of My sufferings, you may be deeply moved with pity and indignation; you may feel, as if nothing could ever separate you from Me, or induce you to take part with My enemies. But be not too confident: it is too likely that before

many hours are over, you will have denied Me more than once, and have passed over to the devil's side, by some wilful sin." Trust not the love and pity, which you now seem to feel towards your dying Lord, until it has been tried, and has proved by His grace, both real for the time, and apt to last under temptation.

To be sure, it might seem as if among ourselves there were little need of cautions of this kind. Whatever the reason be, it is certain that we see little sympathy, little fellow-feeling, on the part of Christians in general, towards the sufferings of our Lord. Only compare men's usual behaviour, during this holy season of our Lord's sad pain and death, with that which nature herself teaches them when they are in affliction or bereavement. Think over our past Passion Weeks, from the first day we could remember until now. How often have we denied ourselves in earnest? How many meals have we gone without, or made coarser? How much more time than usual have we given to holy meditation and prayer? What pains have we taken to be less interrupted by the world, that we might be freer to meditate on the deep anguish and many pangs which our Lord had to endure? I know indeed, that many of us have little time at their own command: they have labours and duties which must be attended to in this as in all other weeks: and many live so hardly always, that they cannot well deny themselves much in diet. Still we have great need, every one to ask himself the question, "Have I done all in this way, that I might have done reasonably and well? Have I, in good truth, done anything at all, as though I

longed in earnest to follow Christ, and suffer with Him ?”

However, notwithstanding the dull and dry appearance of things, we are permitted to have hope, that more is felt than is expressed. Many an one may secretly in his heart be mourning over the Passion of his Lord, while to the eye of those around him he may seem taken up, as usual, with his worldly employments. Many may be denying themselves in secret, while others discern no change in them. God be with them in their good work, and increase the number of them a hundred fold, until this evil world, which now so cruelly keeps them back in their goodness, is itself leavened by them, and forced in spite of itself to become better! But whether they be many or few, and whether this keeping of Passion Week be open or secret, they have need of warning, as had S. Peter, lest even these good feelings prove a sort of snare to them. They must be told not to depend on their present emotions, their imaginations, or even on their tears. Perhaps they are young, and easily moved by any affecting history. Perhaps they have strong and active imaginations, and are quick in painting, to their mind's eye, pictures of any story which they are told: so that they find no difficulty in fancying, how our Lord looked and how those around Him behaved, in the several stages of His bitter Passion. As they hear, they have before them a kind of picture of Christ in the Garden, Christ before the High Priest, Christ before Pilate, Christ bearing His Cross, Christ crucified. It takes them, for the time, quite strongly: their minds are full of it. And so far is well. It is the very purpose, for which

in the first instance the Holy Week was ordained : that for a time we should think nothing, know nothing, understand nothing, but Christ crucified. But so much the more pity, if the thought of Him pass away with this one Week.

Again, by the very make of their souls and bodies, which they cannot help, some are more easily melted into tears than others are. They feel their eyes fill and glisten, and their voices tremble, at sights which they see, at words which they hear, or at thoughts which come into their minds. Men are apt to value themselves on this, as on a token of good feeling, and others are apt to admire them for it. But such tears may be, alas ! and too often are, where the heart is very far from Christian purity. Persons may weep, with a wondering kind of love, at the chaste and high and noble sayings of others, and yet have no heart at all to keep themselves in order, the next time temptation occurs. Saul wept more than once, to think how forgiving David was to him, but he did not the less return afterwards to his malicious purpose of killing David. It may sound strange to say so, yet it is quite true, that a person may be lightly moved to tears, and yet have a very hard unpitying heart. For indeed in many men to weep easily is no sign of deep feeling at all, but little more than a way or custom, which they have somehow got into ; it costs them nothing, it seems for a moment to relieve them, and it gains them credit with others. Beware lest something of this sort befall you this very week. If our Saviour's anguish seem very moving (how, if we were not hard-hearted, could it be otherwise ?) beware how you go away and please

yourselves with having been moved by it. If you are not the purer for your tears, the gentler, the more forgiving; if you do not command your passions the more resolutely; they are no good sign, there is fear of their deceiving you to your ruin.

Beware again of valuing yourself on the sort of indignation, which you and all men naturally feel on reading, how cruelly, how profanely the Blessed Jesus was used on the day of His Passion. It is no new thing for very great sinners to be indignant, on reading or hearing of behaviour, to which in all likelihood, had they any occasion, they themselves would have been parties. It is no new thing for David to listen to the story of the rich man robbing the poor, and to have his anger greatly kindled against the man, while all the while he is himself the man. We too, my brethren, as we read of our Lord's enemies, the Chief Priests, the multitude, the soldiers, Pilate, Judas, can we help being indignant? Or can we help again, if we think seriously at all, feeling shame at our own indignation, who have so often joined with those miserable men, in plotting how to persecute Christ by wilful sin, in preferring Barabbas, the wicked world, to Him; in scorning and abusing His members; in giving Him up to please the people; in selling Him for so many pieces of silver? S. Peter, we know, gave way to his indignation in the garden, when in Christ's cause he drew his sword, and smote the servant of the High Priest. But we may well believe that he felt ashamed afterwards, on thinking of that indignation of his, how unreal and untrue it was as a token of sound faith, since it did not hinder him from denying his Lord, and even forswearing

Him, for fear. If so it was with the great Apostle, what shall we say to ourselves? It is a sad and shameful confession to make, but I fear it would be too true of many an one, that we have been zealous and indignant at some saying or doing, which we thought profane or otherwise wrong, and we have thought and uttered many sharp things upon it, and have been pleased with ourselves for so doing, and thought it a good sign of our condition towards God. And yet, in no long time afterwards, we have permitted ourselves to be carried away by some evil passion or other: shameful thoughts, sayings and doings have been knowingly allowed to stain our consciences. And this has happened more than once, even repeatedly! Strange as it may seem, it is but too possible for persons to get even into a habit of sinning shamefully themselves one hour, and the next hour becoming indignant at some other man's sin, and persuading themselves that their own state cannot be so very bad, else how could they possibly feel such holy indignation. My brethren, be warned of this snare. Do not imagine that, because you easily weep, you of course have true penitential love; neither that, because you grow indignant at sin, you are without doubt zealous and sincere towards God. While throughout this holy week you try to wait on your injured and agonized Lord, and are moved, now to grieve with Him, now to be angry with His murderers and tormentors, remember that there was one standing by, whose grief was surely as true as yours, and his anger as generous and dutiful: and yet in the course of that very night he so forgot himself, as three times to deny and disavow his Lord.

Think that you hear that great pattern of penitents, calling upon you, and upon us all, from his lowly place where he is gone out to weep bitterly, and beseeching you, as you love your souls and Christ Who died for them, to profit by that which was permitted to befall him. "Listen," he seems to say, "in good time, to the warnings which every where abound, not to depend on any present flow of good feelings. Listen, as I at the time did not, to the deep low merciful Voice, which asks you again and again, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? and tells you, there is yet danger of repeated denials." Boast not yourselves beforehand, how great things you will do. That is inviting the Tempter to tempt you, and dealing rudely with the Blessed Spirit Who dwells in you, to be your aid. Think of Satan desiring to sift the corn of God's floor, and you amongst the rest, and fear lest you be found chaff. Think of our Lord praying for you, that awful night, before His Passion: for indeed He did then pray for you, as truly as He did for His chief Apostle: and fear not but in virtue of that prayer you may still find grace to stand, if only you cast off all presumptuous confidence. Think of His Divine Intercession even now going on, His continual pleading for you at His Father's Right Hand. Think of the good you may do your brethren, and of the great loss your fall may be to them. Above all, watch and pray with our Lord, now especially in the hours of His agony. Take care that when He looks after you, when He comes nearer than usual, as in this great week, and especially in Holy Communion with the treasures of His grace, He find you not spiritually asleep. With a humble

and obedient heart, cast yourself down before His Cross, and beseech Him but to forgive you and then to do what He will with you. If He will bestow on you that sweet compunction, that joy in Him and sorrow for sin, wherewith He delights to favour the sincere penitent, well and good: it will be a happy and blessed time. If He seem to hold back, yet do you abide, praying on at the Foot of the Cross, and be sure the blessing will come sooner or later.

SERMON V.

CHRIST'S CURE FOR SPIRITUAL LANGUOR.

PALM SUNDAY.

S. Luke xxii. 45, 46.

“And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow; and said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”

WHEN things have turned out, in any way, very contrary to our expectations, we are of course cast down, and have no heart to exert ourselves. And this in matters both of this world and of the next. Our friends, one after another, are taken sick, and die; our plans and projects fail; it seems as if no one cared for us: it is but too natural, under such circumstances, to give up taking pains about anything, or endeavouring to enjoy anything: we are apt, with that ancient king in his disappointment, to turn away our faces, and eat no bread^a.

And something like this is the case with spiritual disappointment also. When persons have reckoned upon finding their sick souls cured by this or that ordinance, or prayer, or lesson: by this or that course of holy reading and self-denial; and still they find

^a 1 Kings xxi. 4.

their troubles lingering about them, it makes them low and dejected beyond anything else: and if they give way to their feelings, they may easily sink into such a condition, that they will hardly know, as the saying is, how either to die or to live. Particularly I could imagine a person thus afflicting himself, when he found that attending the Holy Communion did not attain for him that sensible peace, that entire comfort and tranquillity of mind, which at first he had expected by it. Many good persons, and many books that mean to do good, are more or less unwise in encouraging expectations of this kind. They teach men to look for assurance of being forgiven and in the special favour of the Almighty: and if religious services fail to give this comfort, they seem to say that such services are thrown away; that they are not in any sense an offering acceptable to God. Those who have been trained in this way of thinking, when they find, as the truth is, that they are not to expect entire satisfaction, no, not in the best and most spiritual service they can offer; no not in worthily partaking of the Holy Communion Itself, they fall for the most part into a sort of weakness and languor, of the worst consequence to their souls: they almost lay themselves down to go to sleep, as if it was no use, their trying to do anything.

Another thing which sometimes has this bad effect upon persons of some good meaning, is, when their relations and friends turn out very differently from what they expected: or when any, known to them, who seemed to be serving God faithfully, take some bad turn, or appear to be suffering under some severe judgement of God. This also, when it happens, is a

great trial to the lookers on, and weakens their hands greatly in doing their duty, if they be not beforehand well rooted and grounded in the faith.

Our Lord's disciples, at the time of His agony in the garden, were an example of this effect of grief and disappointment, how it tends, after a time, to make men sink down in slumber both of soul and body. When He rose up from the prayer which He made in His distress, and was come to His disciples, whom He had set to watch against Judas, He found them sleeping for sorrow. Most people know something of this feeling, what a wearying thing both to soul and body, deep sorrow and disappointment is; how it disposes people to do nothing but sleep on and take their rest, as if all encouragement to work was over and gone. It is indeed but the same kind of thing, as when little children, who cannot have their own way, lie down, and cry themselves to sleep. As far as bodily weariness goes, it was certainly no wonder that the three friends of our Lord were possessed with this infirmity: that they lay down, and slept for sorrow. They had had a day of continual wearying employment: first in getting ready the Passover, then in waiting on Him there, and listening to His divine sayings, until it was quite late at night, when they followed Him into the garden, and were set by Him to watch, i.e. to keep awake, in case His enemies should come upon Him. Here was cause enough for bodily weariness: they would be apt to sink down and slumber, were it only that they had been listening so long to those high and deep discourses of His, which filled all their hearts, and to which they could not attend enough.

But, to tire them still more, they had deep anxiety and sorrow. The whole of their Lord's conversation that evening had been such as to fill them with fear and care. Words indeed there were of most gracious and divine comfort, but they were not plain to be understood, and they were prophetic words, they pointed to something at a distance: while it was most plainly said, and could not be mistaken, that something very grievous was near at hand: most especially, that He was going from them; that the prince of this world was coming; and what troubled them most of all, that even of themselves one would betray, another deny Him, and the rest be scattered every one to his own, and leave Him alone. No wonder if they were cast down at this; the very mysteriousness and dimness of what He said would cause it in some sort to dwell more upon their minds, and make it impossible for them to turn away their thoughts from it. If we can fancy what we ourselves should feel, were any one whom we deeply revered to speak of divine judgements coming on himself, or as though he were about to be left under the power of darkness, then we may have some faint notion, what would be the affliction of our Lord's faithful friends, when they were meditating in the silence of the night, not only on His being to be taken from them, and they, as far as they understood, left alone in the world, but also on His being to suffer, they knew not how, from the Powers of darkness.

They lay therefore on the ground in the moonlight, at some distance from Him, sleeping for sorrow. He also was overcome (so far as such a word may be spoken of Him Who is both God and Man) He too,

was overcome by sorrow : He was sore amazed and very heavy : but His remedy was other than theirs. They permitted themselves to sink down in sleep : He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, " O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." They let their sorrow have its course, and die away into sleep : He Whose sorrow was such, that none other was ever like it, His cure was, first, retirement from all the world ; He went a little farther, was withdrawn from all His disciples, sought where He might be quite alone with His God and Father. Next, He humbled and submitted Himself more and more. " He fell on His face." He, the Lord and Creator of all things, yet, as Man, yielding Himself up to His God : He adored in the lowest posture, saying, " Thy will be done." His remedy therefore was retirement, humble prayer, perfect resignation : and after each divine prayer, He returned to His disciples, and found them sleeping : not only the great body of them, who were left to keep His outer watch, but even those three, whom now as at other times, He had more particularly trusted, and brought nearest to Himself ; even Peter James and John were now found sleeping for sorrow. Now, observe how He dealt with them. He, their most compassionate Master, Who alone could be fully touched with a feeling of all their infirmities : He does not seem to make the same allowance for them, that many of us perhaps think we should have done. He does not spare them, in consideration of all they had undergone : He does not permit them to go on in slumber, but wakes them up again and again. " Why sleep

ye? rise and pray." "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation:" "Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch with Me one hour?" And the last time, with a reproof of still sharper sound, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough: the hour is come; and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." Some of us perhaps would think it harsh, so to be dealt with in times of distress, to be disturbed in the little respite from their trouble which sleep had brought them.

But we must consider, first, that the disciples were on duty; they were set to keep guard, as soldiers or watchmen might be, that our Lord's enemies might not come on Him suddenly, and surprise Him when He was at His prayers. He set them to watch, no doubt for their trial; for He Himself knew what He would do, and when the enemy was coming on Him: and their not keeping themselves awake, not contriving at least that some of their number should keep awake, was a plain breach of duty, however, to our eyes, it might seem excusable.

Again, it was their business to keep awake on account of the danger which they knew to be near at hand. They knew some great trial was coming on their Lord, and that it would put them in peril of sinfully forsaking Him: He Himself had just told them, "Ye shall be scattered every one to his own, and shall leave Me alone:" and, as I said, He had given clear warnings of the treason of Judas and the weakness of S. Peter. It became them therefore to prepare themselves for the combat by putting on the armour of God. They saw their Master retiring to pass the night in prayer. Could they help feel-

ing called on to follow His blessed steps? However, this thought had not force enough with them to overcome their weariness of soul and body. Therefore their gracious Master reproved them; for we must understand His words as a reproof, however gentle. He reproved that one more especially, who had been so forward in his professions just before. "Simon sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch with Me one hour?" As if He had said, "But a few minutes ago thy words were, I am ready to go with Thee both into prison, and to death. Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake. And now thou canst not even keep thine eyes open to wait on Me, and get strength to be dutiful to Me, even for this short time."

What happened presently after, shewed, how much both S. Peter and the rest needed this warning of our Saviour's. When Judas and the Jews came, S. Peter at first was for smiting with the sword: like a person waked suddenly out of his sleep, and hardly knowing what he did; whereas if he had forced himself to keep awake, praying with our Lord, perhaps he might have obtained help, which would have saved him both that and other mistakes. When they found that that way of defence was not allowed, that our Lord was indeed about to suffer, and Satan to be permitted, in appearance at least, to have his own way for a time; this was an offence to them, a temptation to sin; they one and all forsook Him and fled; and even of the two who presently returned and followed Him, one, S. Peter, was cowardly and weak, and could not refrain from denying Him when danger came nearer. Thus it was plain, how greatly they

needed to be stirred up by our Lord's warning : how much, even to our judgement, they lost for want of more diligent watching and prayer.

It is plain also, to what sort among ourselves His gracious words must be considered as particularly belonging. Not to those whose minds are made up, and their hearts set on wilful sin. To those He spoke in a far severer tone : as in His warning to Judas, a little before this ; " Woe to that man, by whom the Son of Man is betrayed : " " good were it for that man if he had never been born." This is how we must understand our Lord to be speaking to those unfortunate ones, who are still abusing their Christian privileges by any, though but one, wilful and habitual sin. He does not say to such an one, " Pray that ye enter not into temptation." For why? He is in temptation, and far worse than temptation, already ; he ought not to watch only, but to escape for his life, and look not behind him, if so, by God's unspeakable mercy, he may at last prove " ^b a brand plucked out of the burning." Neither is our Saviour's tone here such as He uses in speaking to the Pharisees, those proud, cold persons, inwardly corrupt, but, in seeming, so strict. To them He says, " Woe unto you, Woe unto you, hypocrites ! " eight times in one chapter ^c ; He calls them serpents, a generation of vipers, and wonders how they can escape the damnation of hell. The disciples were far from these ; they were weak, but not hypocritical : it was not that their hearts wanted changing, but their eyes wanted to be kept open. Let those look to it, who know in their hearts that they are far

^b Amos iv. 11.

^c S. Matt. xxiii. 13—29.

other than they appear to men, and *that*, not in the way of infirmity, but of plain, wilful, deliberate sin. Neither again must our Lord's saying be taken as sharp enough for the rebuke of the ordinary sort of lukewarm, self-satisfied Christians, who make a sort of easy rules for themselves. For to them also we find Him adopting quite another manner. “^d Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” They also had need of thorough repentance, an entire change of heart and mind. But S. Peter and the rest had continued with our Lord in His temptations. He had kept them in His Father's Name; only they wanted to be wakened up to a full sense of their own high privileges. How many are there of us, who could say the same of their own conduct, from their Baptism, even until now? Neither, lastly, must we mistake the case of the disciples, as being the same with the case of those, who are utterly slothful and negligent, people who go on, not perhaps in habitual wickedness, yet with no real thought, no serious thought, of another world. Such men are indeed asleep, but it is a very different sleep from S. Peter's. It is more like the sleep of death itself: more like what S. Paul describes, saying, “^e Awake, thou that sleepest; and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

We may judge by this, in some measure, how times are altered, and by how much even good people in our days have sunk below the rule and standard, which Jesus Christ Himself used, to try right and

^d Rev. iii. 17.

^e Eph. v. 14.

wrong by. It would be thought quite enough, now, to reprove a careless or lukewarm sinner, with such words as He employed towards His own favoured disciples, who had only fallen into a short forgetfulness. Were a Pastor now to speak so to such as they were, most people would think it hard. For example, were a good sort of person lightly to relax his strict observance of penitential fasting, or to spend unnecessarily more time than he had need in mere amusements, or to fall off in his regular attendance on the Services of the Church, or, more particularly, were he to become down-hearted and listless at any disappointment or calamity, *that*, as it seems, would be the sort of case to which our Lord's reproof might be addressed. But how differently would most people treat it! especially the case of a dejected, melancholy person. Would it not be said to such an one, "Ah, you have been too strict; you have thought too much of these things; you must indulge, and amuse yourself more." All which *may* sometimes be necessary, when bodily health is concerned: but surely as *a cure* for a sick *soul*, it is not what a Christian should listen to. Or it is said, "You must rouse and excite yourself all you can; you must read eager and earnest books, and listen to those who speak most vehemently." Another sort of friends will recommend rushing into worldly business, and filling yourself with as many cares as you can, now that the great care and interest which used to take you up, seems deadened within you for a time. These are the world's remedies against sleeping for sorrow. But if you ask the true and only Healer of souls, His one remedy is, "Watch and Pray." Watch:

keep awake: try to be more than ever alive to that awful Presence, which can never be a moment away from you. Consider that God is on the right hand and on the left, beneath and above, and what is more, within you. If evil spirits be near, He is nearer: if they be strong, He, the Good Spirit, is Almighty. Again, our Lord says, "Pray;" be more than ever diligent in devotion at home, and in the use of the Church-Services. Force yourself to fall on your knees in your chamber, and to turn your steps towards God's House, though it be with a heavy heart. If you doubt whether you be not so far unworthy as to make it sinful for you to do so, open your heart to your Pastor; and, as he shall direct, so do.

This is the course which our Lord in the text directs for those who desire to continue His servants, when, from bodily sickness, or grief, or any other cause, they fall into spiritual languor and listlessness. It is a temptation and a danger to them: they must watch, and pray against it. As long as they do so, they are safe: they are under the shadow of His wing, Who just before His agony prayed to His Father for them, and in His agony set them an example, how they should pray for themselves.

SERMON VI.

TRUTH.

PALM SUNDAY.

S. JOHN xviii. 37.

“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.”

THREE times in the course of His blessed Passion did our gracious Lord thus earnestly refer to Himself as the Truth. First, on the night before His Death, when He was comforting His Apostles, to whom He had just announced His departure, and more especially S. Thomas who had misgivings, not knowing whither He would go, and much less knowing the way. “^a I am the Way,” He said, “the Truth and the Life.” As if He should say, “You My faithful, but fearful ones, may be comforted; you may trust in Me wholly and entirely; for, ‘I am the Truth.’” And observe He said this, as it may seem, in the very middle of the Holy Communion-Service: after He had consecrated, and distributed for the first time the Sacrament of His Body, and when, Judas having departed, He was just about to

^a S. John xiv. 6.

consecrate and distribute the Sacrament of His Blood. Then He said solemnly, “I am the Truth.”

And not many minutes after, having preached to them His last sermon, which begins, “^bI am the true Vine,” and ends, “^cI have overcome the world,” He lifted up His eyes to heaven and communed with His Father in that gracious and awful prayer for His Church militant, whereof one principal petition is “^dSanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth:” i. e., He being the Word or Son of God, Very God of Very God, made Very Man for us, He is Truth, and through Him, as through the Truth, all His people were to be made holy. Thus He spake solemnly to His Father, Thy Word i. e. I, Thy Son, am the Truth.

The same thing which our Lord thus spake in the upper room first to His faithful disciples, and then to His Father, He repeated the next morning in the judgement hall to the worldly and heathen Pilate, before whom He had been brought, as calling Himself King of the Jews. In answer to Pilate’s inquiries, He says, “My kingdom is not of this world.” “My kingdom is not from hence” . . . “Thou sayest that I am a King.” Deep indeed, and high beyond all Pilate’s imagination was the meaning which He had; for may we not say certainly that He meant the same which He had a little before witnessed of Himself before the High Priest^e, “I am the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, the great King of heaven and earth; at Whose Name every knee shall bow, Whom you and all will soon behold sitting on the Right Hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of

^b S. John xv. 1. ^c Ib. xvi. 33. ^d Ib. xvii. 17. ^e S. Mark xiv. 52.

heaven?" This He declared Himself to be. He could not do otherwise, when the time came to speak of it. For "to this end" (so He goes on) "was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth." My Voice is the Voice of the Truth, and "every one who is of the Truth heareth" it. Thus did our Lord three times declare Himself emphatically to be The Truth, when He was on the point of death.

He is the Truth, because He is the Most High God, the very Being of beings; by Whom all things are what they are: in Whom "we live, and move, and have our being:" in Whom all things visible and invisible, Angels and men, were created, and by Whom they all consist, He upholding them by the Word of His Power. Jesus Christ is the Truth, even as He is Light, because He is God, Who cannot lie, and in Him is no darkness, no shadow of turning at all.

Again, Jesus Christ is the Truth, because He is God the *Son*, the *Word* of God, the Second Person in the Holy and Glorious Trinity, Whom we own in the Creed to be "Light of Light," Light flowing out of that Light which is the Fountain of all, even the Father; for the Father hath no man seen at any time, but "the Only Begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." And the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of Truth, in that by Him we receive Christ, Who is the Truth.

Again, Jesus Christ is the Truth, because He is that very Substance, whereof all other good things and good men, from the beginning, have been mere

^f Acts xvii. 28.

^g S. John i. 18.

shadows and images; the End of the law for righteousness, the fulfilment of all types and prophecies: as He declared, Himself, in one of His last words, "It is finished;" that work is done, of which the old sacrifices were but tokens for a time. Christ is the Truth, because in Him all these things are become true and real: before Him they were but words and shadows. He is the True Vine, the True Light, the True Bread, the True Tabernacle, the True Paschal Lamb. The things that we see, called by those names, are but types and shadows of Him. He is the inward part or thing signified in the Sacraments of the Church. Without Him, they are nothing: with Him they are great and real beyond what words can express.

Once more (and to this, my brethren, I desire your very particular attention) Jesus Christ is the Truth, as He is contrary to Satan and all lies. His own word to His own disciples is, "^h Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free:" and to those who set themselves against Him, His word is, "ⁱ Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." . . . "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it." The devil is the father of all lies upon earth, because he told the first lie, saying to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die," though ye do break God's commandments. By this he deceived our first parents, and brought sin and death into the world. Therefore as our Lord came into the world, according to the promise, to bruise the serpent's head, so one great part of His work was to put down Satan's lies and

^h S. John viii. 32.

ⁱ Ib. 44.

every kind of lying spirit, by bearing witness, as He did, to the truth. Satan ruins us by lying; Jesus Christ saves us by truth. He, the Most High God, Incarnate for our salvation, represents Himself to us in this way. Speaking to the froward Jews, He vouchsafes to call Himself, “^j A Man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God.” Our Saviour says, He is a Man which hath told us the Truth: what are we to think of ourselves, when we say what we know to be untrue? Are we on Christ’s side, or against Him? And if we are not on Christ’s side, on whose side must we count ourselves to be?

You see then, that every way Christ is the Truth. Therefore He goes on and tells Pilate, “Every one that is of the truth heareth My Voice.” My brethren, Pilate, when he heard those words, did not know what we know, as concerning Him Who spake them. The least little child who shall come here, to-day or any of this week, to keep the holy time of Christ’s Passion, knows that our Lord is the Judge of Pilate and of all men: whereas Pilate himself only thought of Him as an accused person on his trial before him. Yet even Pilate seems to have trembled in his heart, and was possessed with a mysterious fear of doing anything to our Lord. If we then pass by His words, if we hear them carelessly, if we do not make them our rule, are we not far worse than Pilate, poor heathen as he was? Then let us mark the words well and thoroughly. “Every one that is of the truth heareth My Voice.” Hearing Christ’s voice, i. e. obeying it, seeking to be within sound of it, listening to it, laying it up in your hearts, recollecting it, pon-

^j S. John viii. 40.

dering it over, and above all, doing what it commands and turning from what it forbids—this is the token, the necessary token, whether a man is of the truth, or no; whether he is on God's side, to abide for ever with God, or on the world and the devil's side, to pass away and perish for ever. If we do not so hear Christ's voice as to obey it, all our pretences to truth and wisdom are but a dream. There are not a few in our time, and it seems likely that there will be many more, who value themselves and are thought much of, for their skill in the laws of nature and the rules of science and art: who can do very hard sums, and make out very difficult questions, about the stars, e.g.; or the tides, or navigation, or agriculture, or mechanical works, or know a great deal about politics, history, or languages: many are running to and fro, to make themselves skilful in such matters; and the knowledge of them, as a Prophet foretold^k, is daily increasing. Such persons are under a temptation to think that they are of the truth; that they are more "civilized," more "intellectual" than others; and if they avoid coarse sins, they, and sometimes their friends, are often disposed to think that of course all is going well with them. But what says He Whose Hand hath made all these things, Who causeth them to be what they are, and discerneth exactly what each of them is worth, and the knowledge of it? "If you hear My Voice"—not else—"you are of the Truth." If you are a good Christian, then your knowledge of human and natural things will be sound and real; it will do you real good, and will help to make you free. But if you are not a good and devout

^k Dan. xii. 4.

Christian, your earthly knowledge and skill will but deceive you and lead you the wrong way, and you will find at last that you have been following not the Truth, but a mere dream of it. The Greek philosophers, of whom S. Paul speaks, were in this error: “¹ professing themselves to be wise they became fools;” wise and eloquent they were in this world, as any who ever set up to teach, but it all turned to foolishness, because they would not acquaint themselves with God. Take warning from them, you who are fond of reading and study, who are minded to improve yourselves in matters of human skill and learning. All these things are good and profitable, if you set about them and go on with them in the faith of Christ and in the fear of God: but Christ Himself tells you to-day, that if you hear not His Voice, though you have all knowledge, you are not of the Truth.

And what if your taste and attention *were* directed towards spiritual things—what if you knew the words of the Holy Gospel and the creeds and prayers of the Church ever so perfectly, and could give ever so clear an account of their meaning? Even then, unless your life and behaviour shewed that you were hearkening to your Saviour’s voice, you would not really know Him, nor be on the side of the Truth. For His own promise is, “^m If any man will *do* His Will, he shall know of the doctrine. As for others who “ⁿ hold the Truth in unrighteousness,” they will find by and by that they have lost the Truth itself. “^o The light which is in them ” will be “darkness:” and how great will be that darkness!

¹ Rom. i. 22.

^m S. John vii. 17.

ⁿ Rom. i. 18.

^o S. Matt. vi. 23.

But now I must go on to another warning which our Lord's words convey; a warning but too much needed, I fear, by many in most or all congregations of Christians. When He says, "he that is of the truth heareth My voice," part of His meaning surely is, to caution His people against one special sin, viz. lying, falsehood, and deceit. He seems to say to us, "You may in a way hear My Voice; you may come, and sit before Me as My people, outwardly taking part in Prayers and Sacraments, and *that*, with all reverence at the time: the deep, touching words of the Bible may seem at times to sink into your hearts, and stir up all your best feelings; you may in a manner weep at the foot of the Cross at such holy times as this; and yet alas! all this may be blemished and spoiled, as not being altogether for sincerity and truth, by your allowing yourself in some sort of deceit." Examine yourselves in this, I beseech you, now in this holy week, which ought to be a season of thorough, universal self-examination. Examine yourselves very earnestly, very severely, on this point of truthfulness and sincerity. Ask yourself, "Am I not *at all* in the way of making myself out better than I am, if not in words, like unhappy Ananias and Sapphira, yet silently in some of my doings? Am I very careful not to deceive any one by leaving out things which ought to be mentioned, as much as by uttering false or hypocritical words? When I had a chance to obtain some good thing of this world by saying an untrue word or doing a deceitful act, have I always put away the thought from me, as a direct temptation of the devil, and girded up my loins, as the Apostle directs, with Truth?"

Many and many a Christian man, woman and child, bearing a good name, and conscious of many good feelings, would see cause to lie down in the dust, and humble himself exceedingly before God, if he would fairly ask his own heart such questions as these, and give himself time to answer them thoughtfully. One of Satan's craftiest devices is, teaching us, if we will learn of him, to reconcile a sort of devotional feelings with habitual untruth in what we may think lesser matters. O let us watch and pray against him; those of us especially who are preparing (as all at this holy time ought to be preparing) to draw near and receive their Lord in Holy Communion. For what a fearful thing it would be, if we should come as believers, come devoutly at the time, but find afterwards that we were not of Him, as not being of His Truth; true men, such as He delighteth in, and so that we had gone away with a curse instead of a blessing! Christ is indeed in His own Sacraments, the very Truth, of which they are signs and tokens: but if we would receive Him there to our profit, we must come in the habit and practice of *moral* Truth; as well as in soundness of *doctrinal* Truth according to the light which God has given us. Remember, my brethren, that miserable man who came to our Lord's first Communion with a deceitful lying spirit: remember his end, and beware of the least of his beginnings.

Do this, and thy Lord's saying, so fearful to the irreligious, and to him who would reconcile falseness with religion, will prove to thee a word of exceeding comfort and encouragement. "Whosoever is of the truth," He says, "heareth My voice:" i. e. "Whoever takes always the side of truth, who strives to have

in him no falsehood, no deceit at all, I will cause him to hear, and discern My voice. He shall not be left without a guide in the world; his ears shall hear a word behind him, saying, ‘^pThis is the way; walk ye in it;’ when he would turn to the right hand, and when he would turn to the left.” Be it thy care to continue in all things, and especially in thy dealings with God, very sincere, very genuine, very truthful. Be not, like the Pharisees, wilfully deceiving thine own self, and behaving as if thou couldest deceive God Almighty: but open thine heart frankly to Him, keep back nothing, say to Him with full and free purpose, as one, the best of the Pharisees, once did, “^qLord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” and having got the answer, obey it entirely, and at once.

^p Is. xxx. 21.

^q Acts ix. 6.

SERMON VII.

THE CONTRADICTION OF SINNERS.

PALM SUNDAY.

HEB. xii. 3.

“Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

WE know what contradiction is, when one person keeps on denying what another affirms: whatever is said, finding something to say against it; whatever is done, making it out to be wrong: putting bad interpretations, and making the worst of every thing. Now it is much to be observed, that the Holy Scripture, in this place of the Epistle to the Hebrews, mentions this contradiction as one chief part of what our Lord had to endure in His Passion. Just before, it had been said of Him, that “for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross;” and here we are bidden to think so much of His having endured “contradiction.” Some persons might imagine that “contradiction” was a small thing to bear, in comparison of the dreadful bodily pain and open shame of the Cross, and might wonder at the two being mentioned together, as if there could be any comparison between them. But if we put our minds to

it seriously, we shall begin to understand, how this contradiction might well be one of the most grievous troubles which Christ and His saints have had to endure, a real and very bitter ingredient in the Cup of His Passion.

It seems hard, and bad, and trying enough to any of us, when we are doing and speaking things, as we hope, for the best, and those whom we have to deal with, persist in making the worst of it; wilfully mistaking our words, contriving all sorts of objections and difficulties, imputing unto us evil motives, scorning and vilifying the truths which we teach, and trying to turn away from us those to whom we would do good. I say, this is hard and trying enough to ordinary persons, such as any of us: what must it have been to Him, the Eternal Wisdom of the Father, Who for us men and for our salvation had come down from heaven, and made Himself one of us: that great Lover of souls, Who only knoweth their value, and was about to die to save them: how sad, how grievous, how agonizing to Him, to find Himself hourly contradicted, and spoken against by those whom He came to redeem, and to feel concerning so many of them, that which He spoke of one, “^aIt had been good for that man, if he had not been born.”

Well may we believe, that this was a great part of the exceeding sorrow, even unto death, which pressed upon His soul that night in the Mount of Olives, and caused Him to be in an agony, and His sweat, “^bas it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” Such was “the contradiction of

^a S. Matt. xxvi. 24.

^b S. Luke xxii. 44.

sinners," to "Him Who knew no sin;" Who took upon Him our nature, to help us to overcome the sin that is in us; Who only knoweth to the full the sad consequence, when sinners resist His lovingkindness, and refuse to be healed by Him. The contradiction and gainsaying of sinners was a great part of the heavy burden, which He took on Him, when He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh.

And accordingly we find Him complaining of it many times. As Moses, the meekest of men, was touched to the quick by the perverse words and forward ways of the children of Israel, by the gainsaying of Korah, and the fretful unbelieving talk, which prevailed in all the camp for want of water, (in remembrance whereof, that place was called ever after "the waters of strife," or contradiction, or gainsaying,) as Moses, I say, could hardly endure it, and pleaded with God in those mournful words, "If Thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand, . . . and let me not see my wretchedness:" so our Mediator, far tenderer than Moses to feel all the bitterness of ill-usage, though free from all touch of sinful provocation or infirmity, complains, as it were, from the very Cross, of the stubborn provoking way, which the Jews, His own people, had of resisting His mercy: as if the Light should say, "I shined in darkness, and the darkness would not comprehend Me." "All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and *gainsaying* people," *gainsaying*, that is the word—it means the very same as contradiction. Even in His Infancy this portion of His sufferings had especially been foretold by Simeon,

^c Ps. cvi. 32.

^d Num. xi. 15.

^e Rom. x. 21.

when he took Him in his arms: “^fThis Child is set for a sign which shall be spoken against,” gainsaid, or contradicted; and twice in the Acts of the Apostles, we read how the Jews “^gspake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.”

But as all our Lord's sufferings were gathered in a manner into this one week of His Crucifixion, so was this trial, the gainsaying and froward contradiction of sinners, more grievous unto Him then, than at any other time. Just recollect how the first days of this sad week passed with Him. There was the gainsaying of Judas, his hypocritical complaint when the costly ointment was poured on our Lord: there was the gainsaying of the Chief Priests and Scribes and Pharisees, when they found fault with the disciples praising Him, and the children crying Hosanna in the temple: there was the gainsaying of their disciples with the Herodians, when they asked Him about the tribute-money: there was the gainsaying of the Sadducees in their ignorant question about the resurrection: there was the gainsaying, present to Him by the Spirit of prophecy, of all the generations of unbelievers, that should ever arise in the world, even unto that fearful time, now, for aught we know, very near, when the Son of Man shall come and find no Faith upon earth. All this, to Him Who is the very Truth and Wisdom, must have been matter of great patience, peculiar patience: harder, in some respects, to bear than the open blasphemies and cruelties which filled the air around His Cross.

And how did He bear it all? He endured, He

^f S. Luke ii. 34.

^g Acts xiii. 45, add Ib. xviii. 6.

prayed, He died for them: sometimes condescending to reprove their perverse sayings and to shew them and us the truth; as in the matter of the tribute-money and the dispute concerning the resurrection: sometimes going apart to pray for them: as S. Luke informs us was His custom during this whole week. In the day time He was teaching and conversing in the temple, and in the evening He went out into the Mount of Olives: praying for His gainsayers, until the time came that He should die for them.

Thus our Lord endured for us "the contradiction of sinners" in this Holy Week especially; and you have heard how He, by the Holy Ghost, commands us to consider Him so doing. Why? Because we too, so far as at any time we try to turn to Him in earnest, we too must expect contradiction; we too must expect to be misunderstood and gainsaid. E.g. if there be any who pondering over the serious and plain words of Holy Scripture thinks it necessary to live more strictly, to keep the commandments more exactly, to deny himself more really, to pray and communicate more fervently and regularly, than the generality of Christians do: it is most probable that such an one will find friends and acquaintance enough, very likely, respectable persons, to raise all manner of objections to his careful obedience: many will speak to him and of him, in the spirit of Lot's countrymen: "This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge:" or as those in the Acts of the Apostles, who, finding their heathen enjoyments and ceremonies in danger of being disturbed, cried out against the Christians, "^hThese that have turned

^h Acts xvii. 6.

the world upside down, are come hither also." In every society, in every parish, there are "hinderers and slanderers of God's word," ready (though some of them little intend any such thing) to do the devil's work in drawing souls back from their Saviour. And when any thing is proposed for the good of others, there will never be wanting persons to object and find fault for the sake of doing so. For few in comparison have that charity, which, instead of envying and disparaging, rejoices from the heart in the superior truth and goodness of others, rejoices to find them wiser and better than one's self. Moreover it is a sad truth, that, in our days more especially, there are many "unruly and vain talkers and deceivers," "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake;" wicked newspapers and other writings, setting men against Christ and His Church, and destroying the old true notions of faith and duty; and wherever you go, there is danger of meeting with those who have used themselves to admire all this, and imitate it in their own conversation, as truly contradicting and blaspheming, as ever did those perverse Jews who set themselves against S. Paul. Now all such are very unreasonable, and therefore very provoking: they are commonly also very obstinate, and therefore to argue against them is disheartening work: they are too wise in their own conceit to leave much hope of convincing them, besides that few of us in comparison are qualified to talk of such things. What then is to be done? How should a Christian person behave himself, when Christian truths and Christian duties are being ridiculed and scorned and

¹ Titus i. 10, 11.

put down; when perhaps it is too plain to him, that the world around him, though calling itself Christian, is in love with error and cannot bear the truth? Why, then will be the time to remember our Blessed Master and His conversations and dealings with the Scribes and Pharisees in the first days of this, His suffering week. Sometimes He answered them directly; sometimes He put other questions in His turn, by which they were made to answer themselves; sometimes He kept silence, and prayed for them; sometimes He sharply reproved and warned them: but one occasion there is, on which especially He may seem to have given an example to ordinary persons, who have to endure such contradiction of sinners as we know to be too common in our time. I mean that instance, recorded by S. John in his Gospel, in which, after repeating a most solemn admonition of our Lord to the unbelieving Jews, the Evangelist adds, “^jThese things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them.” He made Himself, as it should seem, invisible, vanished out of their sight; thereby, perhaps, instructing His faithful people, that when they find any, set on contradicting Him, their best way generally is, calmly to withdraw themselves from such a person’s company (as I once knew a sensible good old man, who when a rude unbeliever had come in where he was, and began to speak disrespectfully of the Bible and of good books, simply said to him, ‘I cannot talk with you:’ and the other, finding no one to listen to him, soon went out of the room).

^j S. John xii. 36.

But, however it may be right to behave at such times, one thing is quite certain, that we must not in the least fall away from faith or duty: we must not in any degree give up any thing, that we know to be of God's teaching, because of the contradiction of sinners. We are not to give up Christ, nor yet to be down-hearted and dispirited in maintaining His cause; we are not to be wearied or faint in our souls. Well may we be gentle, considerate, kindly, towards the persons who hold the wrong side. How should a Christian venture to be otherwise, since his Master, Who is the very Truth, endured, and did not strike down, the sinners who contradicted Him? But while we bear with the persons, we are to give no way to that, in which they contradict our Lord; we are not to tire, nor let go our hold of Him, though it may seem to us, that every one around us is doing so. We are not to give way to our roving thoughts and fears, which would draw us this way and that, and leave us no standing ground at all. But that good thing which we have received, the Creed, the Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, we are to keep. With a holy obstinacy we are to stand by the Gospel we have received, and the duty, whatever it be, that Christ hath set us to do. The temptation to give up good things, from weariness and disgust and a feeling that "it is all of no use," will often be very strong. The greatest Prophets, my brethren, were not exempt from it. Think of Moses; think of Elijah. Moses more than once had occasion to make such a remonstrance to God, as I mentioned to you, "Why is it that Thou hast sent me?" "Wherefore

hast Thou afflicted Thy servant?" And Elijah was reduced to pray earnestly, "k O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." "I am not greater than those that have gone before, that I should be capable of a task so hard as this." No wonder, if we feel inclined to shrink from God's work, because of contradictions and difficulties, when such as Moses and Elias shrank from it. But you see, the Holy Ghost will not let us grow weary and faint on our way. He bids us consider, calculate, measure ourselves by One Who is greater than Moses or Elias. If He, the Holy One, the Wisdom of the Father, endured and put up with such foolishness, such senseless contradiction, much more we who are sinners ourselves, who have ourselves had, alas! so large a share in the provoking. If He persevered, what right have we to give up, as though we had a stronger claim to success than He? If He won the day against His Jewish opponents, and is sure at last to put all under His feet; so may even *we*, in His strength.

We, if we seek His grace continually, and are strong and of good courage in improving and using it, we shall see the day, when all contradiction will be silenced. As it is written concerning the Israelites in the days of Joshua, when they were in the fulness of their triumph over Canaan¹; "none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel," so shall it be in that day, "m every tongue shall confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

k 1 Kgs. xix. 4.

¹ Josh. x. 21.

m Phil. ii. 11.

It ought to be enough for our encouragement that by bearing the contradiction of sinners, we are like our Blessed Lord. But He giveth us this gracious promise over and above; “ⁿ Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” He Whom we follow cannot fail us; and He declares Himself our Shield here, and our “exceeding great Reward” hereafter.

ⁿ Gal. vi. 9.

SERMON VIII.

THE REPROACH OF CHRIST SHARED BY HIS PEOPLE.

PALM SUNDAY.

Ps. lxi. 9.

“The zeal of Thine House hath even eaten Me; and the rebukes of them that rebuked Thee are fallen upon Me.”

WE enter this day on the remembrance of the last week of our Blessed Lord's life in men's sight upon earth: those days of unspeakable love and patience, which, because they especially belong to Him, the Church has ever since called, above all times in the year, the Holy Week. And this first day of the week is called (as you know,) Palm Sunday, on account of the Palm-branches, which the people took in their hands, to meet our Lord as on this day, when He made that joyful entrance into Jerusalem. They took palm-leaves, rather than any other, because the Palm is the only true evergreen, never shedding its leaves at all; and was therefore chosen in old times as the fittest kind of tree to represent eternal glory. With such honours did Christ, the true King of the Jews, enter into His own chief city. And the first thing He did was to look over the Temple. As a King's Son, He went straight to His Father's House, to see whether, in His Father's

absence, His service was rightly performed in the place where He had promised to be. He saw what profanation was going on: a kind of fair kept in the outer Court of the Temple, where sheep and oxen were sold, and doves, for sacrifice, and where money-changers had their tables. He was displeased at such profaneness, and came back the next day and drove them all out, and effectually cleansed the holy place of that unholy and worldly crowd: telling them, God made it to be a House of Prayer, but they had turned it into a den of thieves. He had done this once before in His Ministry with a scourge of small cords, the humble instrument of His Almighty power, and in that case the miracle was perhaps more evident than on this. For it does not appear that the people were on His side, as they certainly were, when He made His entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of Passion-week. However, the consequence of both times was, that the Chief Priests and Scribes became exceedingly jealous of Him. They came about Him presently, saying, "By what authority doest Thou these things?" They set about considering how they might take Him, but as they feared the people, they were obliged to wait until Judas made his offer to betray Him to them in the night. Thus, our Lord's zeal for His Father's House, His anger at having it so profaned, was the immediate occasion of His enemies setting on Him and bringing Him to the cruel and shameful death of the Cross. And so the prophetic Psalm was fulfilled, which had said of Him, "The zeal of Thine House hath even eaten Me, and the rebukes of them that rebuked Thee fell on Me." i. e. "Because I was very zealous for Thine House,

very earnest that all things about Thy solemn service there should be for Thine honour, very anxious for the glory of Thy Holy Name, and against the blasphemy of the world, therefore I brought on Myself the reproaches of those who scorn Thee, and care not for Thine awful Presence. They persecute Me, because I shewed them that I would not endure to see My God dishonoured." Here was a plain prophecy that the Saviour of the world, when He came, should be very zealous for His Father's House, and that His enemies would take occasion from this His zeal to speak against Him, and bring Him into reproach and trouble.

And when our Lord was brought to His actual trial before the High Priest, it was yet more evident, how this prophecy was accomplished. For in seeking false witness against Him to put Him to death, there was no part of His conduct, on which they could lay hold, except His having said long before, when He first cleansed the Temple, "Destroy this Temple" (meaning the Temple of His Body,) "and in three days I will raise it up." This saying being brought up against our Lord, when He was on the point of being finally condemned, was another mark of the accomplishment of the Psalmist's prophecy. And there was yet a further one; that same saying was cast in His teeth by His revilers when He was expiring on the Cross. Both the Scribes and Pharisees who stood by, and the malefactors who were hanged with Him, uttered this among other revilings, "a Ah, Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself and come down from

^a S. Mark xv. 29, 30.

the Cross." Thus from beginning to end of His Ministry it was seen that He brought Himself into reproach and trouble by His earnest care for the honour of the Temple: the profaners of that holy place, and the Scribes and Pharisees who permitted such profanation, were, from the beginning, set against Him; His zeal for God's House, brought on Him the reproaches of them that reproached His Father.

It is further to be observed on this part of our Saviour's dealings, that it is specially mentioned by S. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans as a great instance and pattern of self-denial, for the good of others, "b Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification: for even Christ pleased not Himself, but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me." i. e. It was not to please Himself, to exercise at His own will and pleasure the great power which God had given Him, that He visited with such severity the buyers and sellers in His temple. He Who was made like unto us in all things but sin, had no pleasure in being scorned and hated; and it should seem by many things in His life, that He came not out willingly into the sight of men. His pleasure rather was, to withdraw Himself into the wilderness, and pray. But for His people's sake, and for the sake of His Father's glory, He did all those things.

Now we know that whatsoever things our Lord did and suffered in the days of His Flesh, He did and suffered as our Surety, as the Head and Pattern of His mystical Body the Church, and of every member of it. Both the whole Church therefore, and all

^b Rom. xv. 2, 3.

true Christians, will evermore have this mark upon them, that they, like their Master, will be consumed by the zeal of God's House: and, like Him also, will have to bear the scorn and spite of God's enemies for so doing. Thus David, the author of this Psalm, may be supposed, when he wrote it, to have had in his mind what passed on his removing the Ark of God to Jerusalem. We read that on that occasion he brought on himself no small shame by his earnest childlike simple way of joining in the honours paid to God and His Ark. "c David danced before the Lord with all his might," and when Michal his wife, Saul's daughter, saw him dancing before the Lord, "she despised him in her heart." We may well believe that she was not alone in this feeling. There were abundance no doubt, in Jerusalem, of worldly-wise persons, persons who thought very much what others would say of them, who could not understand, how their king should take part in such a ceremony: persons who, reproaching God in their hearts for accepting such honour, failed not to reproach His servants also, and that openly, for paying it to Him.

So it was with holy David, before the time of our Saviour: and so it has been, ever since His time, with His true and obedient members. They have ever been zealous for His House, both His mystical abode or Temple, the Church, which is His Body, and also the outward and material houses or Churches, in which, from time to time, it is His will to receive the prayers and offerings of His people: and their zeal has ever been met by the inward scorn of the children of this world, and so far as they dared, by

c 2 Sam. vi. 14, 16.

their outward reproaches also. To take an instance, which any person may judge of by his own experience. How utterly strange does it appear to those who judge by this world's measures, when they see plain simple-hearted people, who wish to be governed in every thing by the fear of God, making so great a difference in their thought and behaviour, between the Church and other places. The man of the world says, "it is all superstition: no doubt our Lord is here, but then He is also in every other place: He is out of the Church as well as in it: He is in all parts of the Church as well as by the Font and the Altar. What childishness then to think that He is pleased to have us respect this or that building, this or that part of a building, as blessed with any nearer Presence of His!" But the devout and humble worshipper makes no such difficulty. Where God has promised to be, there, he is sure, He is. He bows before Him, not asking how He should be there: and if the world scorn his humble devotion, this does but cause him to be the more scrupulous in rendering it: remembering that it scorned our Lord, before it scorned him. The Jews reproached and questioned with Jesus Christ for His care of His Father's House: and shall not we take it as a favour to be reproached and questioned with, about our exact care to have all things there, "done decently and in order?" What if they seem but little matters in comparison, on which our religious care and pains are required? such as, outward fear and reverence when we are in this place at other times besides those of divine Service; exactness in kneeling at prayers, and standing up to

^d 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

praise God, whensoever health allows it ; making the regular answers at the times appointed, after the pattern of the Angels in Heaven, who cry one to another, and say, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts ;" making these answers in a thoughtful kind of way, not anyhow, but as persons who know that they are speaking to God ; dealing gently and reverently with every part of the furniture of a Church, and more especially, with all that belongs to the Christian Sacrifice and the Holy Communion of our Lord's Body and Blood. I say, very strict and respectful care about all these things is apt to be derided by inconsiderate persons, as if it were merely superstitious and fanciful. And yet it would be hard perhaps to say anything against such carefulness, which might not as well have been said in scorn of our Blessed Lord Himself, when He would not suffer that any one should so much as carry a vessel through the Temple. Let us then make up our minds, to be *very* particular in all such matters, for it is much better to be scorned and misunderstood with our Lord Jesus Christ than to have the foolish world on our side ; accounting us manly and reasonable and free from superstition. Let us not be afraid, by our manner at least, to reprove those who deal rudely with holy things. Let us not fear to look grave and shew our disapprobation of their disrespectful sayings, or more disrespectful scorn and laughter. Let us not mind what they may say or dream about our setting ourselves up to be better and more serious than others. It is charity, not pride, to shew one's dislike of such behaviour as we have reason to think will make God angry : of profaneness, for example, or filthy talking, or making

a mock of sin in ordinary conversation. A word or even a look of grave displeasure on such occasions may do good to all who are present, no one knows how much. Even if they seem for the time only the more scornful and abusive, yet a moment may come when they may think better of it; it may plant a kind of sting in their consciences in spite of themselves, and they may heartily thank you for it one day, and wish they had attended to it sooner. And what is more, we shall avoid the grievous sentence, denounced by our Lord and Judge on those who are ashamed of Him and of His words in this adulterous and sinful generation. He will not so far be ashamed of us, “^e when He cometh in His own glory, and in His Father’s and of the holy Angels.”

But if we be too young or too weak, or otherwise so situated as in no way to reprove sin, there is yet another circumstance of our Lord’s behaviour concerning it, which His Church and His faithful servants have ever noticed, and tried to follow Him in it; and in this too both He and they have been constantly subject to the reproach and dislike of the world. If we cannot or ought not to reprove irreverent ways, yet we may be sorry for them, and may declare our sorrow by certain holy tokens both to God and man. But then as before, we must be prepared to hear the taunting words and bear the reproaches of those, for whose good we are humbling ourselves. So we are instructed in the verse which comes after the text: “I wept and chastened Myself with fasting and that was turned to My reproof: I put on sackcloth also and they jested upon Me. They that sit in the gate

^e S. Luke ix. 26.

“speak against Me, and the drunkards make songs upon Me.” This was fulfilled in our Lord and Saviour, when He mourned at the grave of Lazarus, and the Jews, some of them, instead of believing, went away and told the Pharisees, and they gathered their council against Him; when He wept over Jerusalem, and they beset Him with malicious questions, and would fain make it out that He wanted to destroy the Temple: when He endured for them His agony in the garden, and they came upon Him, and bound Him as a malefactor: above all, when on the Cross, He bore that sorrow which never had any like unto it, and they stood by reviling, and mocked His dying thirst by offering Him vinegar. In all these instances, our Lord’s mourning, the chastening which He took on Himself, was turned to His reproof. But the prophetic saying is accomplished, perhaps, more exactly in His Church and faithful servants of all times, than in what the Gospels tell us concerning Himself. The fasting and other self-denial of good Christians has ever caused them in one way or another to be derided by the world: and on the other hand those persons are most commonly praised and admired, approved and courted, who take their share with a good grace in the common amusements, pursuits, and enjoyments of life: who, as the saying is, manage well, and know how to make the most of things: as we read in another Psalm, “^fso long as thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee.” Because S. John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Saviour, came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, they said, He hath a devil: it seemed so unaccountable to them that any

^f Ps. xlix. 18.

person should of his own accord part with what he might enjoy in abundance, and that innocently, that they reckoned it mere melancholy madness. They thought he must be possessed by a tormenting spirit. And in our time, in such measure as any person is observed to practise real self-denial, more of it than his neighbours think right and convenient, he must expect to have many a false story told, many a strange remark made on him. And indeed this is one reason why persons should keep as secret as possible their ways of fasting, of punishing and chastening themselves: according to our Saviour's direction, "§ When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret." I say, the way which the world has of deriding all such exercises is a reason why Christians should keep them out of sight; just as in the matter of prayer we are taught to guard ourselves, when we pray privately, from the eyes of others. It is not seemly nor natural to make a show of such things: it tempts ourselves to pride, and others to unbelief, and both to profaneness. However, neither prayer nor fasting can be entirely concealed; they must be so far in some measure public, as they are practised in obedience to the Church on her solemn days. And then both of them, but fasting I suppose more especially, is apt to bring on men some disrespect and dislike, not only from the open despisers of goodness, but from those also who cannot or will not do as much in the same way themselves. In such cases it becomes a disciple of the Cross to go on calmly in the way the Church directs, not blaming

§ S. Matt. vi. 17, 18.

nor judging others, nor making any kind of show of himself; turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, since he knows that such kind of scorn is what *they* must expect, who in earnest take up their cross. “^h If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household!”

Particularly it would seem that both the Church and particular Christians may take courage by the example of our Saviour, when they thus fast and mourn not for their own sins only, but for the sins of any whom God has set near to them, or put under their charge; for the fallen state of the whole Church or for the sins of our own Church and country. It was a natural thought, which caused a brave soldier in ancient times to refuse a king's feast, while his comrades were in jeopardy in the field. “The ark of God, and the king's servants, and my lord Joab, abide in the field: and shall I go home to eat and to drink?” It was the feeling of Uriah, the servant of David: and every one, as he reads it, perceives, I suppose, that it was a right and good feeling. Why then should we doubt that the Almighty will bless the fastings and self-denials, the supplications and prayers, which His faithful people offer to Him for His Church or any part of it? Now, e. g., in this holy week, if we really set our mind to the remembrance of our Saviour's Passion, we shall surely pray more earnestly than usual, as He did, for the peace of His Church. We know how much He said and thought on that blessing in His last discourse to His Apostles; how earnestly He mentioned it in that last solemn prayer to His Father: “ⁱ By this shall

^h S. Matt. x. 25.

ⁱ S. John xiii. 35.

all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.” “^jPeace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” This was His counsel and promise, and His prayer was, not for the Apostles only, but for all who should believe on Him through their word ; “^kThat they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee: that they also may be one in Us.” “I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.” Thus our Lord prayed, when He was preparing for that awful Sacrifice, on which all our hopes depend both in earth and in heaven. We are preparing to remember that Sacrifice, in such way as to please Him. Shall we not especially pray with Him for the peace of the Church ? more especially now we see that it is so miserably torn and divided ; not only nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, but even in some cases parish against parish, and family against family. Surely there is great need, now if ever, that Christians should be zealous for the House of God ; that we should weep and chasten ourselves with fasting, not only for our own sins, not only in order to mortify and subdue our evil passions, but also to recommend our prayers to the Almighty, as did the holy men of old, Moses and David and Elijah and Daniel and the rest, when any grievous sin had been committed, or any grievous calamity befell the Church and people of the Most High God. And if any particular day were mentioned, which each of us would do well to keep with fasting and prayer, as well as he can, for the sin, and especially for the heresies and divisions of

^j S. John xiv. 27.^k Ib. xvii. 21, 23.

the Church, perhaps we could not do better than set aside Thursday next, the day before Good Friday, for so praying and humbling ourselves in secret. That is the very day, on which our Lord so earnestly recommended love to His disciples and so earnestly prayed that they all might be kept one: the day also, on which He ordained the most Holy Sacrament of peace and charity, the Communion of His Body and Blood. Who knows what a blessing the humble and self-denying devotion of many Christians, striving together in such prayers, might bring down on this part of God's Church, nay, on the whole Catholic Church?

But even if no blessing *appear*, it is the part of faith to go on with fasting and prayer, at these holy times especially, and to wait, in fear, yet not without cheerful hope, for what is to come of it. The world indeed will always mock our prayers and wishes and endeavours for unity, or for any other part of Christian perfection, saying; "It is no use: it is fighting against man's nature: there must be differences: people must go wrong: to punish and vex one's self for such things, is but useless superstitious folly." It is enough that we can say, in answer to such scorn and unbelief, "Christ punished and vexed Himself, even to the death upon the Cross, and it was the ground of all blessing and benefit to us; why should we doubt that the self-denial and pious sorrow of His people, filling up what remains of His sufferings ¹for His Body's sake, which is the Church, may do us good also in unknown ways, according to their measure; and may help to draw down

¹ Col. i. 24.

a blessing on the whole Church? The Cross, we know, has ever been a thing unaccountable to those who judge by the rules of the world and the flesh: and in such measure as any are permitted to have but the smallest part of it laid upon them, they must be content to seem unaccountable also. But in this, as in all things else, “^m the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

^m 1 Cor. i. 25.

SERMON IX.

THE DUTY OF PATIENCE AT OUR OWN IMPERFECTIONS.

PALM SUNDAY.

S. JOHN xiii. 33.

“Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.”

THE very same words, which our Lord had before spoken to the Jews in holy severity, He here utters to His own disciples in love. “Whither I go, thither ye cannot come.” To the unbelieving Jews it was a sharp and awful threat: as if our Saviour should say, “You are yet on your trial: it is not as yet quite over, but it will soon be: and when it is over, miserable indeed will be the condition of such as you now are. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and whither I go, thither ye cannot come.” It was the voice of the dreadful Judge, pronouncing beforehand the same sentence, which He will pronounce publicly in the Last Day: “^aI know you not: depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.” “Whither I go, ye cannot come: such as you are must abide in the outer darkness: ye never shall be able to enter, where the true Light is.”

^a S. Luke xiii. 27.

Who would have thought to have found the very same words, used by the same Saviour in His overflowing mercy to the most highly favoured of men? And yet so it was. The night before His death, being at supper with them, after He had washed their feet, and when Judas, now fully possessed by Satan, had gone out to make his final bargain with the Chief Priests; it seemed good to Him to tell them more clearly than He had as yet done, how that He was on the point of leaving them. He would not have so great an affliction take them quite unprepared. He had indeed often warned them before: but He knew, how hardly they could be made to take those warnings. The sayings were hid from them, that they perceived them not, plain as they were. As the time therefore was fast coming on, He speaks out more distinctly than ever, and tells them, He is really going out of their sight, and they must prepare to do without His visible Presence in the world. Like an affectionate parent or friend, departing from those whom he loves best, so our Lord, He from Whom all love and tenderness flows into the hearts of parents and friends, He is careful to forewarn those whom He must leave, that He is going. If it came suddenly upon them, it would sadden them too much: it would be more than they would be able to bear. We know what a consolation it is, when a dear and good friend has been taken from us by death, to remember, one by one, the words that he said, and the things that he did, when he knew that he was going away. It is a treasure of refreshing and comfortable thought, to last us to the end of our lives. Our gracious Saviour, in His tender care

of His people, furnished them abundantly with this treasure of comfort. Six whole chapters of S. John's Gospel, from the twelfth to the seventeenth, are full of His parting words, and of things which He did, whereby they should remember Him afterwards. But in order for them to take due notice of these His farewell sayings and doings, it was necessary for Him to tell them openly that He was taking leave of them. It was necessary that He should say such words as, "Whither I go, ye cannot come;" in order that they might receive His directions with that especial religious care, with which dutifully-minded men listen to their father's last will and testament. Only think how earnestly they must have hearkened after what He should say next; how they must have laid it up in their hearts, as the dying command of Him Who was more to them than all earthly fathers and friends. And what are His next words, His dying Command? "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." That is His last will, His testament of Love, His token of remembrance, His keepsake, if so we may call it, which they were never to part with, but to carry with them always and everywhere, in remembrance of Him.

And as all good and devout Christians both find comfort themselves and give it to their friends, in the sad moments of parting, by the hope that, through God's mercy, the parting shall not be for ever, but they may hope for a happy meeting in the next world: so and much more did our Lord soothe and comfort His disciples, grieved at losing Him out of

their sight even for the shortest time, by the promise which He presently made them. When S. Peter, in his eager love, asked, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" Jesus answered him, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." As if He should say, "You and all who love Me may well bear with My absence for a little while, in the sure and certain hope of coming hereafter to the enjoyment of Mine everlasting Presence. The same words are indeed spoken to you which were before spoken to the Jews; 'Whither I go, ye cannot come:' but in a very different meaning, and for a very different purpose. To the Jews and all other Mine unbelieving enemies, the meaning of those words is, 'Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity:' but to all dutiful believing hearts, to My friends and true disciples, they mean, I go away, but it is only for a time: remember, and obey, and love Me, for a short time, while I shall be out of sight: and in due time I will see you again, and you shall see Me, and there will be no more parting for ever."

Observe, this is our Saviour's promise to the most favoured of His friends. They are not promised full satisfaction immediately, but they are put upon their trial with the prospect of entire and perfect blessedness hereafter. If this content them not, if they are still unwilling to wait, if, instead of quietly walking on in the course which God has appointed for us, we will be choosing out ways of our own to be happy: we see by the instance of S. Peter, set before us in the same conversation, what we are in danger of coming to. S. Peter could not make up his mind to stay any while apart from our Saviour, and cried out,

“Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake.” In answer he received the grave warning, “‘Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice.’ By seeking too much, thou wilt be in danger of losing all: by following Me into the High Priest’s palace, not in humble duty, but in self-confidence and against warning, thou wilt put thyself in danger of becoming a final outcast from Me.”

On the whole, we may understand our Lord in saying to His disciples, “Whither I go, ye cannot come,” to be giving us all a lesson of Christian moderation; a warning, that as long as we are in this world, we must never forget our own imperfection: we must not expect too much of heaven upon earth. It is of great consequence to those who desire in earnest to please God and save their own souls, that they should attend in earnest to these gracious warnings of our Saviour. They should be well aware of the condition they are in here. Even after all that Christ has done for them, redeeming them by His Blood and regenerating them by His Spirit, still the infection of original sin remains within them, the temptations of an evil world are around them on every side; they are continually exposed to the whisperings of the Bad spirit: and therefore as yet they cannot come where Christ is: the joy and happiness and peace and purity of “just men made perfect” cannot as yet be theirs, because they cannot as yet be made perfect. It is of great consequence to bear this always in mind; as a few plain instances will shew.

And first, in respect of our prayers and other devotions. Whither Christ is gone, we cannot as yet come perfectly, because we are still subject to so many imperfections and wanderings. How hard is it to most persons, even to those of the best intentions, to fix their minds entirely on the petitions which they are offering to their God, whether in Church or at home, whether alone or with others! You may close your eyes and ears: you may say to yourself, Now this once I will attend: you may earnestly endeavour to seal your mind against intruding and vexing matters: yet in some way, no one can tell how, some disturbing thought will interfere: often the merest and most contemptible trifle will be sufficient to interrupt our prayers or meditations, and come for the time between our God and us, so as effectually, *for the time*, to hide Him from us. Complaints of this sort appear to be almost universal. It seems as if one could not meet with one thoughtful Christian out of a thousand, who is not more or less troubled with distractions in prayer. And it is well for people to be aware of this. Else, when after their best endeavours they find it still happening to themselves, they will be tempted either to be too much cast down, or to become hard and reckless in their dealings with God. But if they had settled it in their hearts beforehand, that such things were to be expected, then the wanderings, how often soever they occur, would not disconcert them so much. They would say with the Psalmist in a like case, “^bIt is mine own infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most Highest.” They would lay

^b Ps. lxxvii. 10.

their account with the difficulty, and it would not so much put them out, when it happened. They would grieve for it indeed; it would deeply vex and humble them; still they would not, on account of it, give up their devotions, as if they did them no good. Rather they will pray again and again, and night and day will watch and endeavour, if so be they may find grace to pray better. They will understand that to have the *full enjoyment* of prayer, the *full* sense that God is with us and in us; nothing at all to distract and teaze our spirits, all this, even for a very short time, would be too much joy and happiness for sinful man. They venture not even to wish it for the present: but this is what they *do* wish and pray:— that their devotions may be pleasing to God, whether they be aware of it or no: that they may yet strive against all distraction, though they do not expect at present to be quite free from all: that they recall themselves, and humble themselves for it, every time they become aware of it. So, in the end, what Satan meant for an occasion of falling, will prove to have been an occasion of spiritual wealth: they will have been drawing nearer to God unconsciously, as children learn to speak, not dreaming themselves of so hard and so great a thing. Their constant, imperfect, wandering prayer now will have prepared them to join in the perfect services of heaven.

And it is just the same in regard to the Communion we attend. Men should not look beforehand for too much in the way of present rapture and comfort, no not even in the receiving the Body and Blood of their Saviour. Where He is in glory, they cannot as yet fully come: but they may come, in

faith and love and obedience, where He is sacramentally, to feed and to change them. If you are not at once lifted up and carried, as it were, out of yourself by such an unspeakable favour, you are not to begin thinking you did amiss in coming: only do your duty: persevere; wait His time: and see if He do not pour you out a blessing at last, far beyond any even the purest feeling of the greatest saint on earth.

So again in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in other devout reading and meditation: it is certain that the best Christians will continue to the end of their lives in some sense ignorant. Even of the prayers which they themselves constantly use, whether in the Church or at home, they will never come to know the full meaning: if they pray and think in earnest, they will be finding out, from time to time, as long as they live, how little a way they have as yet gone towards the perfect understanding of their own words. They will thus have a humbling, and sometimes a distressing sense of their own weakness and frailty of understanding, whenever they turn themselves in earnest to the things of God, and of the danger they are in of giving a wrong turn to those words even of Holy Scripture, which at first sight appear most plain and easy. And it is well they should be humbled; but let them not be too much distressed. Above all, let them not cease to read and meditate; because what they do in that way seems to them always so very unsatisfactory. For instance: what a pity it would be, if in this holy week of Christ's Passion, any Christian, having a Bible or Prayer-Book and able to use it, should put it by in

a kind of despondency, because he found on trial, how very little he understood of what he read, even about his Saviour's Cross; and how utterly unskilful he was in meditating on it, and turning it to his own profit. I would say to such an one, "of course it must be so. Whither Christ is gone, we can none of us follow Him now: none of us can come up to the high and wonderful meaning of what He did and suffered this week for us: but are we therefore to give up thinking about it? The length and breadth and depth and height of the Cross are as yet beyond our comprehension: but is this a reason for turning our eyes away from it? No, surely: for He Who has warned us, that we cannot follow Him now, promised also at the same time that He would help us to follow Him afterwards. Even our Lord's own favoured disciples understood not at the first, what He did and suffered, but when He was glorified, then they began to know His meaning." So let plain unlearned Christians only attend, as well as they can, to what the Church teaches them this week: what little they *can* understand, let them turn their minds to it, humbly, seriously, and very reverently; He will teach them in ways of His own, both what He has done, and what He would have them do. They need not be too much shocked at the errors and false interpretations, (how strange soever) which from time to time they find they have been making. He Who has promised to be their Guide will take care that those errors shall not go on to hurt their souls. They will prove in the end but like the mistakes and fancies of children, which the children themselves, after they are grown up, remember with a kind of loving won-

der, to think how graciously they have been protected from their own natural ignorance, and what would have become of them, had they been left to themselves.

Lastly, the thought of our present necessary imperfection may support us even in that which is far more painful; in the sense of our practical errors, and of our hasty and involuntary backsliding. "In many things we offend all:" the just man and holy, the very saint of God, falleth, in this sense, seven times a day: and sometimes it happens that conscientious persons are wrongly disquieted at this. They are vexed with themselves, and so they ought to be; but they are also in a manner impatient of their condition, angry and peevish that they cannot at once be perfect. Now this is a snare of Satan. He knows that the only thing for such persons is to go quietly and calmly on, correcting their own faults resolutely, yet with a certain reverence and gentleness, as one would correct a child in the presence of a loving father. Satan knows that this is the right course for good persons, when in trouble at their not being yet perfect; therefore he does all he can to disturb them out of it, and make them peevish and discontented. But listen not to him; drive far off from thee the peevish, morose, unloving spirit. You may know it by a cold, dry feeling towards others, by an unwillingness to serve God and be cheerful. Where these things are, we may fear that our vexation at our own backsliding is not altogether of God. There is something of pride in it, which our Lord would have us correct by the remembrance of our imperfect condition, as well as of our many sins.

All along, however, let one thing be well remembered: that this our imperfection is no excuse, not the smallest, for known, grievous, deadly sin. Christ's own baptized, to whom He has imparted of His Spirit, though as yet they cannot come to the heaven where their Lord is, yet may, if they will, by innocency or penitence, abide with Him in His Church on earth. We can none of us be quite perfect: but we may, by His grace, every one of us, be either innocent or penitent. How can we thank Him enough for such great, undeserved mercy?

Mansfield, Mass. - April 22 / 186

SERMON X.

THE WORLD'S CONDUCT TO THE MAN OF SORROWS.

GOOD FRIDAY.

ISA. liii. 3.

“He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him: He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”

THERE is not a verse of this chapter of Isaiah, at which one might not very well begin, as S. Philip the Evangelist once did to the eunuch, and preach the whole doctrine of Christ crucified. As it was in the counsels of Almighty God, that His Blessed Son should endure for our behalf all the various afflictions which we have deserved, so this famous prophecy touches, one after another, the several sorrows which He endured. It speaks of His intense bodily pain. “He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.” It speaks again of the grievous oppression, the wrong, injustice, undeserved ill-usage, which He had to sustain. “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.” And here, in the beginning of the prophecy, mention is particularly made of that, which was the

root of all the rest and which many persons would feel as the bitterest of all; His being despised and scorned. "He shall grow up before" God "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him: He was despised, and we esteemed Him not."

Now this is a prophecy, first and chiefly, of what our gracious Lord was to suffer in His own proper person. He was to be a man of sorrows, and *because* of His sorrows, He was to be despised. Such is the pride and bitterness of our sinful nature, ever since the fall of our first parents: which began with the lust of the eyes, Eve indulging herself with the *sight* of the forbidden fruit; and which has gone on ever since, men refusing in general so much as to look at the afflicted, "hiding, as it were, their faces" from them, because such sights interrupt their enjoyments and satisfactions.

Something of this kind we may every day behold, in the behaviour of those who are at all hardened by the world, towards the afflicted and low-spirited, when they come in their way. They may feel, indeed, some touch of natural pity, but far less than they ought to feel, far less than they used to feel, when they were younger, and before they were spoiled by long indulgence of selfishness. As it is, what are we to think of the ordinary behaviour of persons in high health towards the sick, of flourishing persons towards the disappointed, of high-spirited and cheer-

ful persons towards the feeble and dejected? People like to go on cheerfully and freely in their full relish for the pastimes or employments of the day; and it vexes them to be intruded upon by ill news and melancholy looks. Accordingly, do we not see a great deal of what one may truly call "hiding as it were their faces away?" as if the very sight of the afflicted were a rude interruption of men's pleasure or business; as if God dealt hardly with them, to put them in mind of their own corruption and frailty, by throwing such sights in their way.

Now then, if ever you feel disposed in this manner to turn away from the afflicted, you will do well to check yourself with the question, "Am I not, in fact, behaving as the Jews did, when they turned away from our Saviour?" "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and therefore "they hid as it were their faces from Him." Surely if we hide our face, peevishly or contemptuously, from any one of His afflicted and poor people; if we are impatient and displeased with every thing, except what encourages our mirth, or what helps us in our day's work; we have every reason to think that we too should have hidden our faces from our Saviour, had we known Him in the flesh: we should have been impatient and displeased, at being called on to look off our business or our diversion, towards a person so lowly and little esteemed, so very full of infirmities and sufferings. The history of our Lord's life and death is full of instances of this sort of temper; but none perhaps so remarkable as in the case of the two thieves who were crucified by His side. Even in the very agony of their own death, and that the most pain-

ful and shameful of deaths, both of them at first, and one as it should seem to the end, could find it in their hearts to revile our Lord for His sufferings. “^a If thou be Christ,” they tauntingly said, “save Thyself and us.” They cast in His teeth the same reproach as the haughty Roman soldiers and self-satisfied Pharisees did: “^b He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” Those dying and blaspheming malefactors were the very type of the world’s proud and cruel nature, rejecting and disdainng all fellowship with the poor and afflicted, and refusing to be saved by sufferings, even the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

But secondly, the prophecy of the Man of Sorrows relates to the Faith and Religion, as well as to the Person of Jesus Christ. I mean, that it represents to us, not only the way in which both Jew and Gentile would treat Him while in sight of men, but also the way in which, both then and ever after, the world would receive the preaching of His holy Cross. The preaching of the Cross is, in short, this: That the Arm of the Lord, His saving power and mercy, is revealed from heaven in the Person of Jesus Christ, His only Son and Word, of one Substance with the Father, Who was pleased to take upon Himself our nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, becoming very man as we are; and did, in due time, offer up Himself a sacrifice and atonement for all our sins; so that no transgressor can be forgiven or obtain a blessing from God, but through Him, our only Mediator; and that the way to come to Him, and be forgiven and blessed, is, as He said, to take up His Cross, i. e. to follow the example of His sacrifice.

^a S. Luke xxiii. 39.

^b S. Matt. xxvii. 42.

This is the preaching of the Cross, and in both its parts it is most contrary to the mind of this world. The world, in the first instance, cannot bear to acknowledge that itself is unworthy of any blessing, any good thing at all; and that, in order to redeem it, such a deep and wonderful plan, such a condescension on God's part, was necessary. Especially those who are at all worldly wise, are ever set against a plan which seems to them so very strange, so very unlike what they had expected. Thus it was in the days of our Saviour: His Cross proved, to both Jew and Gentile, the bitterest of all disappointments. The Jew was forced to give up at once his proud imagination of being one of a people who were to be lords over the whole world, and to have their fill of pleasure and grandeur in the kingdom of an earthly Christ. The wise men of the Gentiles were forced to give up their haughty schemes of setting all things right by their own wisdom and goodness. Both Jew and Gentile, on becoming Christians, had to renounce what they naturally loved, to give up pleasing themselves; and to embrace what they naturally abhorred, self-denial, mortification, patience, humility; very often pain, poverty, separation from dear friends, imprisonment, and death itself. For these reasons, when first the Gospel appeared, the whole world was set against it: and why? because it was the Gospel of the Cross. Because it was a Gospel "of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" therefore it was generally "despised and rejected of men."

Thus it was in the beginning of Christian faith: men were actual unbelievers in our crucified Redeemer. They sought and found one excuse after

another for continuing as they were, Pagans and Jews, instead of humbly bowing down every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Those days are over: the power and wisdom of God has proved too strong for the selfish pride of man. Even the worldly-wise, in despite of themselves, have now for many ages been compelled to admit, in profession at least, the doctrine of the Cross. Kings, as the Prophet foretold, have "shut their mouths at" Christ, that is, the very highest of the great men of the earth can find no more to say against the Gospel. For very shame they dare not resist their own reason, which tells them they must believe in Christ Jesus.

But although many are forced, as far as belief goes, to own that what the Scriptures tell us of Christ dying for us is all true, they cannot bring themselves practically to submit to the doctrine; they scorn the notion of taking up their own cross. In this sense, very many who seem to themselves sound believers in Christ, do in fact hide their faces from Him: they despise Him, and esteem Him not. It is the last thing indeed, with which they are ready to charge themselves: they are quite ready to profess, nay even to feel, that they cannot obtain everlasting salvation by any merits of their own: they look to Jesus Christ only, as deserving salvation for them: and if at times they find themselves wound up to certain strong feelings of assurance, and of being nearer than others to Christ, they consider themselves, for the present at least, quite safe, and have no fear at all but that they have really sure hold of the Cross.

But let no man be too secure. Laying hold of the Cross, in order to eternal salvation, is not a thing to be done once for all, and then let alone for ever. It is a manner and way of life, not a mere feeling, to come and go. It is, as S. Paul briefly expresses it, being “^d crucified with Christ,” in mind and heart, and temper, and conduct. It is so living, that angels observing you may say, “It is not so much he that lives, as Christ that liveth in him.” In a word, it is giving up your own will, and resigning yourself to Christ’s will in all things.

People will say, of course, they are not such as this: they put in no claim to angelical perfection like S. Paul’s. But before they flatter themselves that even in some tolerable measure they are *trying* to live in the spirit of Christ’s Cross, let them compare their own ways of life with those which they know Christ approved of.

Christ said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit;” and when He was indeed rich, (for He was the Maker and Owner of all things,) “for our sakes He became poor.” How many of those who profess to hold by His Cross follow His example in this respect, really preferring poverty to riches; contented and cheerful in a low estate, and thoroughly convinced that God deals kindly with them in casting their lot among the poor: or if He has given them riches, living evermore in fear of themselves, and drawing back on purpose from many indulgences, that they may be so far like the poor?

Again, Jesus Christ said, “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;” and His Spirit

^d Gal. ii. 20.

long ago taught that “^e it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting.” And when we consider the thing, we see plainly, that this is no strange doctrine at all; it is simply saying, that grave thoughts of eternity must be better for an eternal accountable being, than light thoughts of the present hour only. But what says the world in general to this? What say those (and they are many thousands of Christians) who are wholly taken up with the pursuit of pleasure, quite impatient of any interruption in it? They may, for a time, have tender and reverential thoughts of our crucified Saviour, when they think of Him: but their way of life being in reality a contradiction to the spirit and meaning of His Cross, it is much to be feared, and indeed it commonly happens, that these intervals of pious thought become rarer and rarer with them, and the end is, they go on quite at their ease, as if they had never heard of the Cross at all.

If any one thing be more necessary than another, especially for persons beginning life, it is that they should learn by God's grace to guard against the first beginnings of this profane spirit; and should early accustom themselves to watch and pray, lest, while they seem to be indulging only in the natural cheerfulness of youth, they be in fact conforming to the world, and training themselves to despise Christ crucified.

One sign by which they may try themselves, is the disposition they feel towards self-denial, and towards those who are the great examples of the practice of that most Christian grace. For instance, they read

^e Eccles. vii. 2.

in Holy Scripture of Daniel fasting for the sins of his people, and being rewarded by an angelical visit, and a promise from heaven of the redemption which should be by Christ Jesus : they read of S. John the Baptist, his rude and coarse and poor life in the wilderness : they read of S. Paul keeping under his body, and bringing it into subjection : above all, they read of our blessed Saviour fasting forty days and forty nights for the purpose, as it should seem, of heavenly contemplation ; upon which followed a great triumph over His and our spiritual enemy, and a visit from Angels ministering unto Him. Christians read of these things in the Scripture ; and how do they feel disposed towards them ? Have they any desire, according to their ability and measure, to imitate the self-denying ways of the holy Apostles and Prophets, of the Baptist, and of our blessed Lord Himself ? Or do they not rather shrink back from the thought altogether, as something Jewish, and now gone by ? Do they not reckon, in some way or another, on being good without abstinence and self-denial ? Would they not feel a little inclined to ridicule and discourage the attempts of others, if they saw any smitten with the love of Christian discipline, and trying to practise it according to the rules of the Church ? This is a question, the answer to which may help them to know a good deal of their own disposition to profit by the Cross of Christ. If they are unwilling or ashamed to deny themselves a full meal, or a day's amusement, in order to holy mortification, what reason have they, if tribulation or persecution arose, to expect such grace as may keep them from falling away ? If they be so unfaithful in that which is

least, in the first rudiments of self-denial, who shall give them that which is greatest, a Martyr's crown in the kingdom of heaven?

Again, you may know a good deal of your own true mind towards the Cross of Christ, by considering how you feel and behave towards the religious scruples of others. For example: there is a great deal of difference between men in respect of the liberties they take in business. Some will make profits, and take advantages, in bargains, from which others draw back, accounting them inconsistent with strict Christian honesty. If any man feel inclined to scorn and slight these latter, as being ridiculously and strangely scrupulous, knowing little of the world, and the like; this is but a poor token of their temper towards the Cross, and those who take it up. So as to speaking the exact truth in conversation; keeping promises punctually, and the like: it is bad enough to fail one's self in those duties; but to scoff or discourage others who attend to them better, is surely a much worse sign.

One very common and very dangerous trial is, when notions and practices, forbidden by God's law and His Church, are become customary, under whatever pretence. For example, consider the notion that people may choose their own religion according to their own fancy of what will most edify themselves, and the consequent practice of running after strange teachers, without regard or reverence to the warnings of the Church. These things are now become so common, that I suppose it must require some Christian courage, something like taking up the Cross, in any one who resolutely sets himself against them on

true Church principles. Surely then, this is a time in which we ought to be much on our guard, how we join in the disrespect and scorn with which the world is sure to treat every opinion or person which it calls *bigoted*. If there be such a thing as Christian truth, and a Christian Church, surely they are to be upheld, and we must cling to them, in spite of any loss of credit, ease, or profit in the world : and to damp any such purpose, and make light of any such sacrifice, is no light error, but rather a mark that the person so judging is one of those, to whom, if he had lived in our Saviour's time, the very Cross of Christ would have been foolishness.

In this and in all parts of duty, deeds, not words ; settled behaviour, not passing emotions ; a self-denying mind, not an eager feeling of confidence ; these are what they must practise, who desire to wait, with our Lord's true disciples, round the very foot of the Cross, and not to go away, like the mass of the people, just smiting their breasts, and returning to the world and their sins.

And the one great principle to guide and help us in carrying the Cross into our daily lives, is that which our Lord Himself has given : “^f Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in His own glory, and His Father's, and of the holy Angels.”

Remembering this, let us watch ourselves in our several stations more and more carefully ; thinking no matter or part of our conduct too trifling to be governed by the rule of the Cross. Let it be our

^f S. Luke ix. 26.

happiness, our joy and honour, to live, and if it please God, to die, like true disciples of the crucified Jesus. I do not mean, of course, that we can have such a mind at once, but let us at once set about trying to have it. Let us leave off hiding our faces from what the world dislikes to see ; from the poor, the mean, the sickly, the disappointed, from whatever is "despised and rejected of men:" but rather welcome such persons, and wait upon them to the very best of our power, as beholding in them, after a sort, so many images and representations of our despised and rejected Saviour. Finally, whenever need so requires, let us take up our Cross boldly ; let us be, in the best sense, free and independent, steadily persisting that we will judge of our duty by the rules of the Gospel and not of the world. Let us fear nothing so much as rude or insincere treatment of the Cross. For on our portion in it depends our only hope of escaping eternal ruin.

SERMON XI.

THE LIFTING UP OF THE SON OF MAN.

GOOD FRIDAY.

S. JOHN iii. 14, 15.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

ALL Christians know that the sum of their religion, their hope and faith and love towards God, and, in a word, all their duty to Him, are gathered together, as it were in a point, in the Mystery of this great and awful day. We all know that the Cross of our Redeemer must always be all in all to us. We all acknowledge it in words, when we are asked: Some of us make mention of it often, and seem indeed to depend on it. But there is great danger of our very often letting it slip out of our minds: great danger of our speaking without seriously thinking of it; and the greatest danger, perhaps, of all, that we shall be contented with very slight and imperfect notions of the Cross, of its power and meaning, and of the portion we must have in it ourselves, if we would not make void the gracious purpose of Him Who bore it, and died on it for us.

Some Christians, I fear, there are among us, who, although they have been so often told, yet do not seem ever to have laid it to heart, Who this great and holy Saviour is, Who did so great things for us all. I speak particularly of some of the poorest, and some who, though not poor, are yet most ignorant among our brethren, who cannot read, or who have much neglected their reading, and have also neglected, most unhappily, that which is better than all reading, diligent attendance on the worship and teaching of the Church. Among such as these, I have reason to think, it is no such very rare thing to find a person ignorant even of the very doctrine, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Most High God, begotten from everlasting of the Father. They think, or rather speak of Him, as their Saviour, as One perfect in goodness, to Whom they must look for every thing. But they never knew in earnest, or, if they did, they have forgotten, and it does not come into their minds as they hear and read of Him, that He Who died for them to-day, is verily and indeed their God.

Our Lord, indeed, from the beginning of His teaching, had warned His disciples against this error; for in His conversation with Nicodemus, one of the first of His discourses, He said, it was inexcusable in men not to receive His witness, seeing He is at once both God and Man, is at the same moment both in heaven and in earth. “^aNo man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven.” One should wonder, after so many plain declarations such as this in the sacred Scriptures, the Creeds, and the prayers of the

^a S. John iii. 13.

Church, how any Christian, though ever so unlearned, should be ignorant of the Most High Nature of our Blessed Lord. Yet I have found such, and am much afraid, from certain ways of speaking which we often hear, that there are many more than we know of.

And no wonder, if they neglect the Church prayers. How can we expect Christ to shew Himself to us, if we care not to come where He has promised to be? We may think we make up for it by diligent reading at home; but it is far otherwise. Besides all other dangers which he brings on himself, the man who neglects to worship Christ in communion with the Church, which is His Body, is almost sure to fall into some grievous error, or to miss some necessary part of Christian truth. This point of our Lord's Godhead is apt more especially to be lost out of that man's mind. For it has ever been His way, to hide it on purpose from those who are unworthy, and to reveal it to those only, who, like Nicodemus, seriously seek Him.

But plainly, if we do not keep it in our minds that this Jesus, Whose sufferings we remember to-day, is indeed our Creator, the Most High and Glorious One, we can have no right notion of His infinite Mercy, no real thought of His Cross, what it really is.

Again, there is this great mistake, frequently committed by those who should know better, who never indeed would think of committing it, were it not that it has been taught them as the true meaning of the Bible, namely, that Christ's lifting up on the Cross was only in order that we might believe or trust in Him: that we might feel our great sinfulness, which made such a Sacrifice necessary, and His unspeakable

love, Who condescended to offer Himself; and that so feeling, we might be saved, without any great change in our conduct; saved, in short, by belief and trust, without true Christian obedience. I fear that this is a very common error indeed, and that it makes most of us a great deal more careless in our lives, and easier when we draw near our end, than the true doctrine of the Cross would permit us to be.

See what our Lord says of that doctrine here, where He mentions it to Nicodemus; the very first mention of it, which we read of in His teaching. The Son of Man, He says, Who came down from heaven, and is in heaven, He Who is both God and Man, He must be lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. He was to be lifted up on the Cross, to what end? "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Men might have believed in Him, without His being crucified; many, we know, did so, before this last sad day of His mortal life; but this faith of theirs did not of itself bring them to life; it was necessary that He should die, to make their faith saving; and this alone shews, that mere believing and trusting, on which some would fain depend, has no such saving virtue in itself; it is Christ's Death which must save us, if we are, by God's Mercy, saved at all. Faith saves us so far, as it makes us partakers of His Death; but we must not depend on what we call our faith, if our mind and behaviour in other respects be not such as to keep us joined to Jesus Christ, dying with Him daily to sin, rising again unto righteousness. And this we may plainly gather from what our Lord says of the brazen serpent, compared with what is said

of the way, in which His Death was meant to be our salvation.

The history of the serpent, as told in the book of Numbers, and therefore of course well known to Nicodemus, who was a master and teacher in Israel, was this: When the people, under Moses, were on their way from Egypt to Canaan, and seemed near the end of their journey, they had to turn back unexpectedly by command of Almighty God, and their soul “^bwas much discouraged, because of the way;” they were a good deal out of heart, at finding themselves still so far from the end of their journey. This was trying; and they were too impatient to stand the trial as God’s people should. They fell again into their old sin of murmuring against Moses, and against God also, for bringing them into the wilderness at all. This brought God’s anger upon them. He sent fiery serpents, which bit many of the people, that they died. “^cTherefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee: pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

Now we know for certain, because our Lord has told us, the deep Christian meaning of these things.

^b Num. xxi. 4.

^c Ib. 7—9.

The fiery serpents represent our sins, taught by the Old serpent, partaking of his nature, and wounding us even to death; everlasting death both of body and soul. The people are alarmed, and begin to repent, and come to Moses to pray for them, and he prays accordingly; but they are not yet delivered. This seems to point out the insufficiency of all that repentance, or the law, or prayer, can do, without Christ the only Saviour. Moses is directed to make the serpent for the people, and bid them look towards it; as the law prepared the way for Christ, being an example and shadow of good things to come.

The next is a very remarkable circumstance, and must have seemed very strange and unaccountable, until our Blessed Lord came. But now we understand that it points to a great secret of God's power and mercy. I mean the circumstance, that what was appointed to be the means of curing the serpent's bite, was itself to be made in the form of a serpent. Let us attend to S. Paul's explanation of this. "d What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Jesus Christ, in order to save sinners, was made Himself Man; was made in the likeness of sinners, like them in every thing, their sin only excepted. Thus was fulfilled the mysterious command of God to Moses, that what he should provide for curing those bitten by the serpents, should be itself in the figure of a serpent. And by turning to Him that grievous evil was to be remedied, which they could not otherwise rid themselves of: not by

^d Rom. viii. 3.

repentance, or by confession ; not by any one interceding for them. The Law was too weak to heal them : it could only tell them what was right and wrong ; it communicated no power to do the right and avoid the wrong. It proved, indeed, that our natural misgivings were right ; it encouraged us to delight more and more in God's commandments inwardly in our hearts, but it gave us no spiritual power to perform what we thus certainly knew to be good. For that purpose, the Son of God was to come down, to be made Son of man, to take our nature upon Him, even the very flesh and blood, the earthly and bodily part of it, that we, drawing near and partaking of Him, might be made one with Him by His Spirit, might be made sons of God.

Further, the brazen serpent was to be lifted up. Of the meaning of this there cannot well be any mistake. It denotes the lifting up of our Lord on the Cross ; as S. John, in another place, tells us, that when He told the Pharisees, “^eI, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me,” He spake the word, “signifying what death He should die.” He did not mean merely that His Name should be preached in all the world, and made thoroughly known as the only way of salvation ; but He meant that He should be really and bodily lifted up. He meant His nailing to the Cross, as it was this day, and then the setting of the Cross upright in the earth. By this He became, more especially, the “scorn of men, and the outcast of the people.” As both the Prophets and the Gospel speak, “^gHe was numbered with the transgressors,” being crucified, put to that death which

^c S. John xii. 32. ^f Ps. xxii. 6. ^g Isa. liii. 12. S. Mark xv. 28.

was ordinarily the portion of the vilest malefactors, and that, between two thieves. Hereby also He offered Himself for sin, became a willing Sacrifice to bear what we deserved. No man took His life from Him, but He laid it down of Himself^h; the blessed Cross being His altar, and He Himself both Priest and Offering. And thus He accomplished what S. Paul adds in the place just now mentioned, that He was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin."

Yet again : the brazen serpent, thus lifted up, was to be looked upon. The wounded persons were to turn their eyes towards it, and so to be healed. So Christ, lifted up on the Cross, is to be believed on, to be looked upon with the eyes of our heart. "The Son of Man" is "lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "The Law could not save us, in that it was weak through the flesh;" through the corruption of our fallen nature, for which it provided no cure. It could but point to Him Who is our cure, as Moses did to the brazen serpent. It could not justify us, it could only bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Justification by faith is that which was betokened by the healing of the Israelites when they looked up to the serpent. It justifies, because it brings us to Him, with Whom to be united, is to be justified; that is, to be forgiven and saved from this evil world; to be clothed with heavenly righteousness. God's purpose is, that no one person, so coming to Jesus Christ, or so brought to Him in infancy and united to Him by Holy Baptism, should ever perish. He would have them keep

^h S. John x. 18.

for ever that everlasting life, of which He has made them partakers.

This is God's gracious purpose: but as among those Israelites in the wilderness, if any person, after being once healed, had gone in the way of the serpents, and been bitten again, his having once looked up at the brazen serpent would do him no good, that we are told of; so if we, after all that our Blessed Redeemer has done, throw ourselves wilfully into that sin from which He came to deliver us, what can we expect but a heavier condemnation, for adding this to all our other sins, that we have "trodden under foot the Son of God," and counted His Blood an unholy thing? This is very plainly hinted in the place from the Epistle to the Romans, which I just now read to you. "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh;" shewed in the flesh of the Son of God, what punishment sin deserved. To what end? That we, having faith in Him, might lead easier and less strict lives? That we might be excused in some measure from trying to keep *all* His commandments? That we might be less anxious in offering to Him the sacrifice of *exact* obedience? No! His purpose was quite contrary: it was, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Christ died, not to excuse us from obedience, but to purchase for us strength to obey. The fruit of His death, besides pardon and deliverance from the stain of sin in which we were born, is His Holy Spirit poured into our hearts, enabling us to fulfil the righteousness which the Law requires; or

ⁱ Heb. x. 29.

^k Rom. viii. 4.

rather so uniting us to Him, that not we, but He Himself, Christ dwelling in us, shall work what is good and holy; according to S. Paul's frequent sayings, "¹I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;" and again, "^mNot I, but the grace of God which was with me;" and again, "ⁿI can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

This agrees well with what our Lord elsewhere tell us, of the everlasting life, which, He here says, was the intended lot of whosoever believeth in Him. The night before this awful day, in that solemn intercession to His Father, after setting forth the purpose of His kingdom to be the gift of everlasting life to as many as God should give Him, He goes on, and tells us in what consists this high and mysterious blessing, everlasting life. "This," says our Lord, "^ois life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." It is not merely living and escaping unpunished, as we, in our low, coarse way, are apt to imagine, but it is to know God and Christ. And what is knowing Them? This is a question which eternity only can answer; since, when we have let our thoughts go as deep in eternity as we will, yet the knowledge of God and of Christ, which happy souls will then have acquired, will be as nothing, compared with what will still remain for them. But thus much the Scripture most earnestly tells us concerning that knowledge of Christ which is our life, that it cannot be where wilful sin is: "^pWhosoever sinneth, hath not seen Him, neither known Him."

¹ Gal. ii. 20.^m 1 Cor. xv. 10.ⁿ Phil. iv. 13.^o S. John xvii. 3.^p 1 S. John iii. 6.

And another thing which it warns us of expressly is this, that our knowing Him there in His glory will depend on our first having known Him in His sufferings here. As one faithful saying is, that “^q Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” so another is, “^r If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” If we would have the life of Jesus made manifest at last in our now mortal body, we must in this life be “^s always bearing about in the” same “body the dying of the Lord Jesus;” the marks of His death, the Cross, the thorny crown, the print of the nails; that is, mortification and self-denial; watchful obedience, even where obedience is irksome; the flesh constantly subdued to the spirit.

Thus it was that the great Apostle hoped to be saved by the Cross of his Lord; not only by gazing on it, at a distance, with earnest feelings, but by embracing it when laid upon him, and holding it fast, and using his cares, and sorrows, and self-denials, as so many nails to fasten him to it in regular obedience. His prayer was, to know Christ “^t and the *fellowship of His sufferings*, being made comformable unto His death.” He had no thought of being saved, without earnest, careful obedience for the whole remainder of his life, and pressing forward to make each day holier than the day before.

Depend on it, my Christian brethren, S. Paul knew the true way of salvation. If *he* thought it dangerous to look behind him, or at all to slacken his endeavours after more holiness, we may be very sure it was and is most dangerous.

^q 1 Tim. i. 15.

^r 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

^s 2 Cor. iv. 10.

^t Phil. iii. 10.

How should it be other than most fearful danger, wilfully, in any measure or manner, to let go our hold of the Cross? to turn from Him Who is there lifted up, and go back to our sins, though it be, as we think, but for a moment?

There are some of you, I believe, that come very seldom here, who yet are generally present on this day. Would to God they might be prevailed on to consider, and not turn their backs on their Saviour all through the year besides! Would that they would make some small beginning of self-denial, by coming here regularly to honour Him, Who died for them, though it be sometimes irksome and inconvenient? Would that both they and we all, as we come here trusting in the blessed Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, might be willing also to learn and practise, how to bear it after Him! For without this, He Himself has told us, we cannot be His disciples. If we bear not His Cross, we forfeit the eternal life, which He bought so dearly for all that believe in Him!

SERMON XII.

THE LONG-SUFFERING MERCY OF CHRIST.

GOOD FRIDAY.

ROM. x. 21.

“ All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”

JESUS CHRIST, Who is the Same yesterday, to-day and for ever, declares in this verse, first by His Prophet Isaiah, and afterwards by His Apostle S. Paul, what His way and manner of proceeding would be and was, in redeeming men first, and then in the setting up of His Divine kingdom over the souls of His redeemed. His infinite mercy was to be shewn in two several ways, over two several sorts of people. To those who knew Him not, who asked not after Him, who were not called by His Name; to them He reveals Himself, and that surely is unspeakable goodness: but there is a goodness yet beyond that: namely, His persevering in the offer of pardon; His not at once withdrawing Himself, when we rebel and vex His Spirit, and cast His mercies away from us. This great and good day opens to us both these treasures of His infinite Love, in shewing us God Incarnate on the Cross, not only once for all lifted up, and drawing all men unto Him, but also continuing to stretch forth His hands, continuing to do so

all day long, while the world disobeys and provokes Him. Let us see how this was accomplished first in our Lord Himself at the time of His Crucifixion, then in the circumstances of His Church and kingdom, when He first established it in the world: and lastly in what we see and know of our own and other men's goings on, and His great long-suffering towards us.

First then, when we read of our Lord stretching forth His hands all day long, doubtless the Holy Scripture intended us to think of what happened on this awful day; the Saviour of the world, God Incarnate, lifted up between earth and heaven, His Arms stretched out, and His hands and feet nailed to the Cross: that fearful and mysterious sight, of which so many signs, more or less dark, had gone before in God's dealings with His people. Such as, the rod of Moses, the staves of Jacob, David, and Elijah, and more especially Moses, winning the day against Amalek by holding up his hands in the form of a cross; and that former prophecy by Isaiah himself^a, that God should spread forth His hands among them, "as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim." All these and very many more tokens God gave in the Old Testament of the manner of the great deliverance, such as it appeared to the outward eyes both of men and Angels on this day. The Creator and King of Israel, the Son of the Blessed, was to stretch forth His hands, and to do so all day long. And so our Lord did. He began to do so at nine o'clock in the morning, and ceased not till after three in the afternoon, when according to the Jewish reckoning the Friday was fast wearing away, and

^a Isa. xxv. 11.

the Saturday's rest just about to begin. For Joseph and Nicodemus had only just time to take Him down and lay Him in the grave which was close at hand, before the Sabbath came on. When He had once begun to suffer, He ceased not, but continued all that day, stretching forth His hands, even after He had given up the Ghost. And we know that, from beginning to end, it was His own free will so to suffer. No man took His life from Him, but He laid it down of Himself. He could have prayed to His Father, and He would presently have given Him "more than twelve legions," more than a Roman army, "of Angels." But He had taken upon Himself to tread the wine-press alone; to drink every drop of the Cup which His Father had given Him. And therefore, when the hour came, He stretched forth His hands without resistance, and permitted them at their will to destroy the temple of His Body. He, at the very sound of Whose voice they had just before fallen to the earth. He could have come down from the Cross at any moment, according to the insolent challenge of His persecutors, "Let Him now descend, that we may see and believe;" but, in mercy to them and to us all, He chose to continue there and complete the Sacrifice, willingly stretching out His hands, from moment to moment and from hour to hour, till He had fully borne all our iniquities, made atonement for the whole race of Adam, and opened the way, which Adam's sin had closed, from earth through Paradise to Heaven.

If now we turn our eyes for a moment away from the Cross itself, and consider what was going on around it, among the witnesses of the unspeakable

Sacrifice, I suppose we may see clearly enough two sorts of people, two sorts of behaviour towards our dying Lord, answering to the other portions of the prophecy now under consideration. There were some who had never sought Him, who asked not after Him, who had never called upon His Name: and by whom at that moment He vouchsafed to be found, to manifest Himself to them, to say, “^b Behold Me, Behold Me.” Such were that penitent malefactor, whose heart God so touched that he changed the reproaches, which at first arose to his lips, for an open confession of his sins and of faith in our Lord; and, instead of railing, prayed to be remembered when his Lord should come in His kingdom. · Such was the Roman Centurion, who standing by, when he saw the earthquake and those things which were done, could resist no longer, but openly confessed, “Truly this was a righteous man,” “the Son of God.” In these two instances, and we know not in how many more, our Lord, stretching forth His hands in the death of the Cross, made Himself known, and manifested His glory and goodness to some who had hitherto been either complete strangers, or had known only to scorn Him. They were the first-fruits of the harvest of redeemed and sanctified souls, whom He was to gather in from all parts of the fallen world. But with regard to most of the bystanders, as they had before reviled, and cried out, “Crucify Him,” so they continued disobedient and gainsaying through all the wonders of His death. The sight of His hands spread out all day, and of the witness which His Father bore to Him by those fearful miracles,

^b Isa. lxxv. 1.

had no more effect on them than the same mighty hand and arm had had, stretched out in a different way, ages before, upon their fathers. They were still faithless and stubborn, and would not set their heart aright; they called Him a deceiver, and insolently set a guard on His tomb: they persecuted His Apostles after Him, and were bitterer enemies to His Truth than ever.

But in speaking of the Jews' behaviour, I am come to a second part of the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy: the manner, that is to say, in which the kingdom of Christ crucified, when it came to be set up, was received by the nation of the Jews on the one hand, and by many Gentiles on the other; of which we read at large in the Acts of the Apostles. S. Paul, in the text, plainly teaches us that we are so to apply the prophecy in Isaiah. For he is speaking of the affront which the Jews took, when they found that the blessing of the Gospel, the privilege of being Christ's people, was not to be confined to themselves, who were the seed of Abraham after the flesh, but belonged to all nations who should come in and submit themselves to the faith of Abraham. He says, "Did not Israel know?" that is, "Had not God, in the Old Testament, given clear notice that His kingdom would be so thrown open? and his answer is, Yes; for amongst other prophecies Esaias had said, in the name of Christ, "I was found of them that sought Me not" (that is of the heathen Gentiles, who looked for no such deliverer, but, when He came, were less prejudiced against Him) "I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me." They, as we read in the Acts, were glad and willing to believe often,

whilst the Jews in every town spake against the Apostle's words, contradicting and blaspheming. And so the Church of Christ at its first beginning had the same fortune to undergo as her King and Head, when He laid her foundations by His death; she too had to stretch out her hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people. In both cases, moreover, it was the Cross, the stretching forth the hand, not in power but in suffering, which made the excuse of the disobedient and gainsayers. "Himself He cannot save:" how should He save others? "Let Him come down, that we may see and believe." Such were the scoffings around the Cross itself, and of its first witnesses we know it was said, they were the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all men. Their Master's Cross, as they bore it about, not only in their lips but in their lives, was a stumbling-block and foolishness to all the children of this world.

And are not these things even yet true? Is it not so, that even yet, in the whole world, Christ crucified is daily being found of those who were perfect strangers to Him, and spreads out His hands to those who refuse to regard Him? Surely it is so: it is a kind of law of His kingdom. What He underwent this day in His own person, the same He has to undergo continually in His mystical Body, the Church, which is the visible token and pledge of His Presence among us.

As to the first point, that Christ crucified is continually being found of those who seek Him not, we have not far to seek; we are, I suppose, every one of us an instance of it. By the great and distinguishing mercy of Almighty God, that mercy which is

called sometimes the grace of election, He permitted Jesus Christ His Son to be found of us in our infancy, long before we could seek Him, or ask after Him, or call ourselves by His Name. He then made us members of Him, His own children, inheritors of His kingdom. No one knows what hidden grace, what divine and heavenly strength and nourishment He then poured into our hearts; how near He brought us and kept us to Himself in ways of His own, which we never could think or dream of: and then when our infancy was over, when we began to look about us and to know one way of speaking from another: would it not be most true concerning many of us to say, that the first words we heard were as the voice of one saying, "Behold Me, behold Me," and when we looked round, we might see with our mind's eye our crucified Saviour spreading out His hands unto us? Were not His Prayer, His Creed, His Commandments, among the first lessons we learned? His house, His Day, His Book, His Ministers, are they not all in a remarkable manner mixed up with our remembrances of our childhood? And how then can we fail to perceive that we at least are instances of that great and distinguishing mercy which the Holy Scriptures describe, when they speak of Christ crucified shewing Himself of His own accord to those who could not look after Him? And must not our account be so much the heavier, if we reject so great, so free salvation?

But over and above the great and unspeakable gift, bestowed on every one of us when we were made Christians, many of us, it is likely, can remember some unlooked-for unsought warning, some providen-

tial turn or other, which has brought Christ crucified before them, and turned their minds towards Him, in a way which, they must feel, themselves had nothing to do with: it was entirely the work of a gracious power out of sight. Perhaps when we were hurrying on after some worldly—what if it were even some sinful—object; when we were altogether taken up with some plan of business or diversion, and beginning too much to forget Him Who is all day spreading out His hands to us; at such a time, it may be, the hand of the Almighty struck down some near and dear friend of ours, or visited us with disappointment or sickness; or set full in our view the example of some other, no worse than ourselves, falling under His sore judgements; or sent some good and holy pattern in our way, in whom we might discern, how desirable and blessed a thing the Cross of Christ is sure to prove to those who sincerely take it up; or He made our eye to rest on some verse of Scripture, or some sentence of a good book; or He guided our Pastor, in sermon or in conversation, to say the very thing which suited our case, and caused us to attend to it. In some one of these ways, it may be, or in some other like these, Christ has been found of us, when we sought Him not: and all this, over and above that deep mysterious mercy of His, which is called in the Prayer Book, “Preventing grace,” whereby He disposes our corrupt hearts, of themselves quite unfit and unable, to mind His godly motions, and not reject them at once. All this reason we have to know, that Christ crucified is still found of those who seek Him not. Now let us turn once again to the other part of the prophecy, and see how that agrees

with our experience. Is He not still spreading out His hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people? Not to speak now of our age and nation generally, can it be doubted or denied that there are among us many grievous sinners, many intemperate, many unchaste, many covetous, many who take God's Name in vain, many despisers and neglecters of His solemn worship? Yet to each and all of these He still continues His holy Church, the great witness of His Presence. It is in their sight; they may betake themselves to it; He has not removed it out of their reach. His ministers are ready to advise them, sick and well; the Church bells sound in their ears very often, putting them in mind that there is another world; they are not forbidden to draw near, where He has promised to be, to listen to His holy Word, and put up a prayer for pardon and amendment. Now these things, one and all of them, are so many tokens of our Redeemer, spreading forth His hands: it is in very deed Jesus Christ, evidently set forth before our eyes, crucified among us. We have scorned or slighted Him, day after day and week after week, going on in our sin and bad habits; and He still abides in the midst of us: He has not cast us out nor banished us into any of those many countries of the world, where there is a famine of His holy Word and Sacraments.

Nay, and this very Presence of Christ crucified is, with too many of us, a reason for disobedience and gainsaying. We make the Cross an excuse for breaking the commandments, saying; "Of course we cannot be expected to give up this and that. There must be some allowance made for us. We cannot

deny ourselves." Yet He to Whom we belong has plainly said, Whosoever "c will come after Me, let him deny himself"—let him "take up his cross and follow Me." But we would fain persuade ourselves, that it is enough to look towards His Cross: that there is no real necessity for us to take up our own. Such are our perverse and cowardly ways: and yet He still continues among us, and has brought us again to see that awful day in which the Holy Church throughout the world joins to humble itself before His Cross.

Christ is still spreading forth His hands; He will do so all day long: but let us mark it well, it is only "all day," and the longest day, as the saying is, must some time come to an end. And then "the night cometh when no man can work:" it will be too late then to look towards our Lord on the Cross; He will appear to the rebellious then, only on His Throne of Judgement, and what their feelings will be, He Himself has told us. He warned us of it in words at the very time of His Crucifixion. "dThen," said He, "shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." Again He shewed that time in vision to His beloved disciple S. John: the enemies of God, hiding themselves "in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains," and saying to the mountains and rocks, "eFall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." "The wrath of the Lamb;" the wrath of Him Who died for us: heavy and intolerable will it fall on men, in proportion to the love which they have slighted, and the promises they have set at naught!

c S. Matt. xvi. 24.

d S. Luke xxiii. 30.

e Rev. vi. 16.

Thus the long-suffering of Christ on the Cross is a lesson of wrath and fear to those who are set to do evil. In another way of looking at it, it is a lesson of comfort to many of us: to all, who are honoured, like Simon the Cyrenian, with a call from God's Providence to bear any part of His Cross. Such is, more or less, the condition of those whom He has entrusted in any manner with a part of His work. Parents, masters, teachers, and more especially spiritual Pastors, all who are called on at all to bear the burthen, or give account, of the souls of their brethren, who are to spread out their hands and try and draw men to God, must expect to find those to whom they are sent, more or less disobedient and gainsaying. Their labours and self-denials, their pain and grief and care, will often seem in this world to obtain no other return than such as the Apostle spoke of^f, The more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. Well, let such parents and teachers remember the mystery of Good Friday, and while they mourn for the condition of the impenitent, yet rejoice that themselves are counted worthy to fill up in some trifling measure the sufferings of Christ, to touch His blessed Cross, though it be but with one of their fingers. When they find their good advice treated with contempt, their persons scorned, and their labours disappointed, let them imagine to themselves Jesus Christ, their Saviour, on His Cross stretching forth His hands in pain and death for the Jews who were standing round, reviling Him. When all they do seems to fail, and every one to go away, not at all the better for their exertions and sufferings, let

^f 2 Cor. xii. 15.

them consider how little good seemed at the time to be done by the great and unspeakable Sacrifice, which was all the while reconciling God to man and taking away the sin of the world: and let them not despond, but think within themselves, "Who knows, what unseen benefit the Almighty may be secretly preparing to work, even by these poor exertions of ours, which appear so utterly worthless; even as we know not how many of those, who actually took part in the murder of Jesus Christ, might afterwards repent and be converted, by virtue of that gracious prayer, "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do?" This is true faith, not to leave off because we see no good of our labours, but to go on in humble confidence, in quiet prayer, and hope to the end.

One thing more: when it pleases God to lay on us any part of our Saviour's Cross, by the ill behaviour of those with whom we are trusted, let us presently begin to look to ourselves more strictly, lest, in some part of our own conduct, we prove unworthy of this high honour of bearing some little of His burthen, and bring a curse on ourselves, and not a blessing. We see how cold, how hard, how shameful, other men's obstinate behaviour appears to us. Let that teach us how our own must appear to God and Angels and good men. Other men may disappoint our endeavours to improve them; but we cannot be disappointed in trying to improve ourselves, if we will but try in earnest, relying on that Cross, which is lifted up to-day before our eyes, with power to draw all men unto it. God knows, we have many of us done too much towards throwing away even that

only hope. But His gracious word will not permit us to despair. There is hope that He will help us to perfect our repentance, Who, first of all, was found of us before we could even think of seeking Him. and has never since ceased to spread out His hands from the Cross, disobedient and gainsaying as many of our ways have been. There is hope yet: but it will soon be despair, if we lose much more time.

SERMON XIII.

THE RENDING OF THE VEIL.

GOOD FRIDAY.

S. MARK XV. 37, 38.

“And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the Ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.”

CONSIDERATE persons, wishing to have right and religious thoughts of that, on which they can never be long without thinking, the Passion of our Divine Lord and Saviour, will naturally turn themselves, with deep and serious attention, to the signs and wonders in heaven and earth, which we read of in Scripture as happening at the moment of His death. From the sixth hour, when He was nailed to the Cross, “^athere was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour,” when He gave up the Ghost. The sun was darkened so long, and at the very moment of His death, “^bthe veil of the temple was rent” in the midst, “rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many.”

Now these wonders, doubt it not, were not mere

^a S. Matt. xxvii. 45.

^b Ib. 51-53.

things to wonder at; they had other purposes, besides that of awakening and alarming the minds of those, who then saw or who now read of them, and forcing them to feel, in a manner, God's immediate Presence. They were so many signs and tokens, so many visible words, as it were, spoken from heaven, to help serious and dutiful minds to right notions of that most awful of mysteries, the humiliation of God the Son to the death of the Cross.

And among them all, it would seem that the Bible sets before us, with especial care, this which I have just recited from S. Mark; "The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;" because it is expressly mentioned by three out of the four Evangelists, and that, in more immediate connexion than the other wonders, with the unspeakable moment of our Lord's death. There is surely something very significant in the sound of these two verses. "He gave up the Ghost: and the veil of the temple was rent." Every one, however ignorant, must perceive that there is some deep meaning here, more than what (as the saying is) meets the ear. For what great thing is there in the rending of a curtain, considered in itself, that it should be mentioned as the first effect of the Sacrifice of the Son of God, as the thing to which the Holy Spirit would first of all draw our attention? Moreover, we have, as you will presently hear, large explanations of the meaning of this miracle in S. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews especially; larger, perhaps, than we find in any other part of Scripture, of the darkness, the earthquake, or the other wonders of that moment.

For these reasons it will prove, I trust, no undutiful

or unthankful exercise of our devout thoughts on this fearful yet most merciful day, if we enquire of Scripture, what most likely was the lesson, which Almighty God taught us from heaven concerning the Sacrifice of His Son, by causing the veil of the temple to be rent in twain.

The veil of the temple was the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy; for Solomon's Temple, as the Tabernacle of Moses before it, was divided into two several parts or rooms, both holy, but one holier than the other; rooms differing, both in their furniture and in the offices to be performed in them, in such a way as to teach the worshippers, that God was indeed in both by a peculiar Presence, but yet that in the Inner, or Most Holy Place, He was by a nearer and more awful Presence than in the outer place, which was simply called Holy. The veil, or curtain itself, was made of "blue and purple and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work;" it was adorned with images of cherubims, and was hung on four pillars of some precious wood overlaid with gold. It was at first made by Bezaleel, after the pattern which God shewed to Moses in the mount, and afterwards copied exactly by Solomon, according to the directions of his father David.

As to the difference of the holy things placed within it from those without, and of the holy offices in like manner, you will find both shortly summed up by S. Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews^d. In the first tabernacle, he says, which is called Holy, "was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread:" and behind the veil, "the tabernacle which is called the

^c Exod. xxvi. 31-37.

^d Heb. ix. 2-5.

Holiest of all," having "the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold; wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the Covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat."

Again, as to the distinction of offices performed in the two places. "e Into the first tabernacle," says S. Paul, "the priests went" every day, "accomplishing the service of God: but into the second went the High Priest alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people." S. Paul goes on to shew, that the Most Holy place was a figure or type of the kingdom of heaven; the outer sanctuary, of their condition under the Law. The difference between them is the difference between sanctified earth and heaven.

What now is the veil, so drawn across as to separate these two kingdoms of God from one another, yet such as to give hope that it may be one day entirely withdrawn, and the two made altogether one; since even in the Temple, a solid building, God's providence allowed not a partition between the two holy places, but provided a veil, in remembrance and imitation of the Tabernacle; what, I say, is the spiritual meaning of the veil? S. Paul tells us in one word; the veil is the Blessed Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. For, says the Apostle, He hath provided for us a new and living way, "f through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh."

The miraculous rending, therefore, of the veil, at the moment of the death of the Son of God, was a

e Heb. ix. 6, 7.

f Ib. x. 20.

token of the rending of our Lord's Blessed Body by the nails and spear, and of the violent parting of His Soul and Body for a while. Accordingly, it may be well to observe, that the one Evangelist who gives no account of the rending of the veil, namely, S. John, (leaving out in this, as in other places, what had been sufficiently related in the former Gospels,) S. John, I say, instead of the rending of the veil, acquaints us with a real rending of our Lord's Body, which had been altogether left out by the other three; namely, how one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side.

So far, then, we cannot doubt, that the veil rent in twain was a kind of parable, intended to represent to all ages, what at that moment was happening to the Saviour of the world, in some of its great and mysterious purposes and effects. It is, indeed, a subject on which one is almost-afraid to touch, lest one should incur some part of the sentence of those, who draw near the altar and table of their Lord unworthily. But it is too late for those to draw back, whom Christ has made ministers and stewards of His mysteries. They must speak, however unworthily, especially on such days as this. Perhaps, then, the following may be considered, not untruly, nor irreverently, as some account of the manner in which the Temple veil, rent in twain, answers to our Saviour's crucified Body; and may help us to right thoughts of those fearful, yet most heavenly truths, concerning that glorious Body, which none can believe without trembling.

First, as the veil concealed from the eyes of the worshippers the most holy place made with hands,

which was but a figure of the true, so the Body of our Lord and Saviour was a kind of veil or shadow drawn over His most high Godhead, the open Presence of which is that which makes Heaven. The worshippers in the outer Tabernacle, when they looked towards the veil, what did they see but a mere curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet? When with religious dread they carried their thoughts onward, and represented to themselves what they knew was behind, though they had never seen it, the ark of the covenant, over which, between the outspread wings of the cherubim, the glory of the Lord had from time to time become visible, then they felt how near they were brought to the great and dreadful God. In like manner, when our Lord was on earth, those who looked on Him with careless eye saw but One, in Whom, judging as the world judges, there was no "form nor comeliness; a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; despised and rejected of" His fellow "men." And those who looked at Him hanging on the Cross saw in Him not only the form of a man, but also, as S. Paul says, "the form of a servant," of a malefactor brought to a shameful and wretched death. So completely did the flesh of our Lord do the office of a veil, that is, hide from the eyes of men that eternal and essential glory, which He had with the Father before the world was, and which never for a moment ceased to be His, when He seemed to be bowed down to the very lowest of His earthly humiliation. Even on the Cross it might still be said of Him, as He said of Himself to Nicodemus, "The Son of man is in heaven." But His Body, till after His Passion, hid this His glory from men.

Since then, it is become a part of His glory, being changed, made spiritual, and taken up, and sitting on the right hand of the Father, yet so as that, mystically but really, all His members partake of Christ ; so that instead of hiding His Divinity, it is the very means whereby we are brought near to the same.

And this is the second point, in which the holy veil answers to the most holy Body of our Lord and Saviour. We have seen that, being entire, it concealed His glory ; now we add, that, being rent, it made that glory manifest and became the way to it. As the tearing of the veil threw open the most holy place, so the rending and piercing of our Lord's Body throws Heaven open to us. Thus S. Paul instructs us, explaining why the holy place was used daily among the Jews ; the most holy, only once a year. "These things," saith he, " being thus provided, into the first tabernacle the priests went continually, accomplishing the service of God : but into the second, once only in the year, went the high priest alone ; the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure, answering to the time then present," the time of the law, and before the kingdom of heaven. In that time, the promise of eternal life was dark and doubtful, and the way of acquiring it, the Blood of Christ, was shadowed out dimly by the imperfect sacrifices of the law. But Christ being come, the veil is rent ; we can see after Him into the oracle, or most holy place ; whither He is gone, we see, and the way we see ; the way made open to us, that where He is, there we His servants may be also.

But not only is the rending of the veil a token to us of the great evangelical manifestations of our Lord's Divinity and our own eternal life; it is also a token of the great evangelical privilege, the grace as well as the light of the Gospel; it shews us Jesus Christ as the *way*, not only as the *truth* and the *life*. What I mean is this; as through the torn and divided veil was the only way into the most holy place, so through our Lord's wounded and bleeding side, is the only way to the kingdom of Heaven here, and to Heaven itself hereafter. For in respect of past sins, He is our only expiation; in respect of communion with God in time to come, He is our only sacrificial feast, whereby we may be nourished in the Divine life.

On both these points also the Epistle to the Hebrews gives full instruction. "§ Christ being come an High Priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." The greater and more perfect tabernacle, God's work and not man's, appears to mean the Body of Christ, which, with His precious Blood poured out on the Cross, is that one sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world: even as the blood of the Jewish sacrifice, with which once a year the high priest entered within the veil, was a sufficient atonement for the purifying of the flesh, made the Jewish people ceremonially pure, so that they might come and serve God in His temple, without bringing on themselves the guilt of impure worshippers.

§ Heb. ix. 11.

Thus the veil being rent signifies pardon, through Christ's sacrificed Body, for sins past; but it also signifies communion with Him, through the same Body, in time to come. For what says the same Apostle, a little further on in the same letter? " ^hHaving therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus," which entering in He first tried, and thereby sanctified it to us, to be "a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." The Flesh of Jesus, then, His glorified Body, offered by Himself as High Priest, is a new and living way, through which believers, baptized persons, drawing near from time to time, may with reverent boldness enter into the holy places; they are invited, exhorted, encouraged to do so. It is intimated that their not doing so is wavering from the confession of their faith, neglecting the proper consideration of one another, and forsaking of solemn assemblies. It seems impossible to doubt, on the whole, that the passage has reference to the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist; and thus it becomes more manifest, how the rending of the veil throws light on the Passion of our Lord and Saviour. That miracle, happening at that moment, was, as it were, a voice from heaven, a voice speaking to the very eye, and therefore in all languages at once, to this effect: "Understand, O ye sons of men, that Jesus Christ hath given Himself not only to die for you, not only to be a Sacrifice for your past sins, but also to be your spiritual food and

^h Heb. x. 19.

sustenance in that Holy Sacrament.” *That* is a point of so much consequence, it lies so very near the heart and root of the doctrine of the Atonement, that Almighty God has condescended to impress it on us by a miracle, wrought in a way to draw all men’s regards, at the very moment of our Lord’s giving up the Ghost. I say, the Everlasting Father Himself, in this miracle, speaks out to us from Heaven, telling us plainly that we are indeed saved by Christ’s death, not, however, without being brought into real communion with Him, of which communion His Body is the instrument.

Who does not see the practical import of such a warning? Ought it not to turn all our thoughts, not the thoughts of a few of the best, or quietest, or oldest, or most knowing, among us, but the thoughts of us *all*, to the Holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, as being indeed what the catechism says it is, “generally necessary to salvation;” as not coming into the Gospel, by any means, in the way of something over and above, rendering it indeed more perfect, but yet such as that it might have been done without: not at all so, but rather as an indispensable part of it, which was in Christ’s mind from the beginning, and with a view to which chiefly, for aught we know, He sacrificed His Body to the death? For “ⁱthe bread that I will give,” said He, “is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world;” and “he that eateth” thereof, “^keven he shall live by Me.”

Fix in your hearts, therefore, this great truth, that according to the rule and scheme of the Gospel, as it is revealed in Holy Scripture, Christ’s Blood is ap-

ⁱ S. John vi. 51.

^k Ib. 57.

plied to those only who duly receive Christ in His Holy Sacrament. To slight the Holy Communion, therefore, is to slight Christ's Blood; to put it off till old age or sickness, is, in effect, to say to Christ, "Depart from us for a time: as yet, we desire Thee not, and are content to do without Thee."

You will say, perhaps, you are far from such blasphemy; you are full of faith in the Cross; you trust for pardon and salvation in nothing else. Well; but is it faith to be choosing out for yourself which among God's holy commandments you will attend to, and which you will disregard, at least for a time? Was Abraham's faith like that? Was it not rather that he believed at once whatever God told him, closed at once with whatever God directed? If we would have faith like his, we must receive the whole Gospel, not one select portion of it. We must look not to the Crucifixion merely, but to the Incarnation as preparing the way for it, and to the Holy Sacraments as flowing from it. We must regard Him not merely as Jesus dying for our sins, but as God made Man sacrificed for us, and afterwards becoming our sacrificial feast. So shall we not be tempted, in our earnest thankfulness, ever to forget the deep reverence we owe Him; nor, again, in our reliance on what He has done, to neglect what we have to do for keeping up continual communion with Him.

For the mystery of the spiritual or divine life of a Christian, taught us by this figure of the veil of the temple, is this: That the only true happiness is partaking of the Divine Nature, as S. Peter calls it, communion with God in the Person of His Son: that the way to this Divine communion is communicating

with Him, being made members of Him, as Man, the Man Christ Jesus: that this must be through His blessed Body, and this again through His Holy Sacraments.

All which being plainly taught in the Bible, shews how dangerous and presumptuous it must be, to depend, as some do, on spiritual communion merely, the communion, as it is called, of faith and prayer alone. There is no promise that such shall be either born again, or eat the Flesh of our Lord, and drink His Blood; yet without being born again, there is no entering into the kingdom of heaven; and without that eating and drinking, we have no life in us.

And think not to say to yourselves, these are but slight and easy things; how can so much depend on them? *How*, and *why*, are not good words, to be spoken by a creature to his Creator. Remember by what sort of disobedience sin and death came into the world. Was it not by an outward action, the most easy and indifferent in itself, that can be imagined? was it not by just tasting of a fruit? In a word, was it not by a kind of sacramental act, a sacrament of death and evil? Why then should we hesitate to believe all that the word of the Lord tells us of our sacrament of life and good? If we will not believe what Christ tells us of the one, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely live," what reason have we to think we should have believed what the same word told Adam concerning the other, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die?"

It is a great grace which is given us, as Christians. Let us endeavour, as we may, to have thoughts and

views answerable to it; thoughts and views suited, not to children, but to full-grown men in Christ Jesus. May none of us prove so wilfully imperfect, as to trust to what is called mere morality, seeming goodness and kindness of heart, while he neglects his God and Saviour! And again, I say, may none of us, on the other hand, either lose his heavenly crown, or render it less precious, by resting on some one supposed part or mean of the spiritual life, taken separate from the rest! As, for instance, let no man trust in prayer, who can give alms, and does not: let no man rely on his own high feelings of faith and love towards Jesus Christ, except he sincerely long for, and gladly, yet humbly, receive, the Holy Communion.

Look once again to the veil, rent in sunder at our Lord's Passion. It was the great, the unspeakable Sacrifice, which did that work, and opened the way for life and immortality to be clearly seen and had by sinful man; no morality, no deed of man, had such power: therefore, if we would partake of that power, we must have fellowship with something far beyond what is usually called morality, far beyond the best deeds of man.

Again, as the atonement in old times could only be made by the priest when he had come within the veil, so it is only as members of Christ's Body, that our persons can be reconciled to God, our services acceptable: members, I say, of His mystical Body, the Church, which we are first joined to in Holy Baptism, and then continue and grow in the same, by sacramentally feeding on His natural Body in the Lord's Supper.

Do we, then, in our reverence for the Sacraments, make void either prayer or faith, or good works? No, in no wise; we establish them all: we consider prayer, faith, and obedience, as so many exercises of grace already given, to prepare us for more and higher grace to be continually given. Prayer, faith, obedience, in the Church's account, are conditions to the best end, communion with Christ; but the Sacraments are, for the time being, that very end itself: not the less really so, because their being so is not discernible by any sense, outward or inward, on our part. Prayer, faith, obedience, are infinite blessings; we cannot spare any one of them; only they are not the end, but means towards it; the end is, partaking of Christ. He is our all, our rest, and our perfection; not our own prayer, faith or obedience, though we suppose them carried highest, and continued to all eternity; still, to find what we seek, God dwelling in us must lift us out of ourselves, and receive us nearer and nearer to Himself. This is the hope which this day's Sacrifice purchased for us: nothing less than the hope of communion with God, not to be believed, but to be seen and felt, and that, more and more clearly, through eternal ages; "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast," not to be understood, limited, or measured, by any of the thoughts or things of this world, but "entering into that within the veil." Such is the mystery of Good Friday, taken in connexion with that to which, in the accounts of true piety, it should always be referred, communion with our Incarnate God through His Sacraments.

¹ Heb. vi. 19.

Who dare gainsay these things? They are the things which the Church has taught from the beginning out of God's Holy Word. Who would dare gainsay them, were it not that the lives of Christians, in general, seem so unlike what we should expect in persons endowed with such unspeakable privileges?

Let us seriously consider this; for it is no light thing to be in God's sight among those who by their doings encourage His enemies to blaspheme and deny His grace given to His Church.

What if, even this day, after all the solemn services we have heard, we should go back to our cares and follies, and be as if we had never heard them; as if no Saviour had died for us, as if there were no Cross to take up, no holy Feast to partake of? Surely if we do so, we shall bring this upon ourselves over and above all other burdens, that we shall have turned Good Friday, the Day of Atonement, into a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy; we shall have done much towards hiding the light of Christ before men; who, seeing our evil works, will be encouraged to go on refusing to glorify our God and Father, which is in heaven.

God forbid that it should be so with us! But we must look to it, for there is great danger.

SERMON XIV.

THE ATONEMENT OF THE CROSS.

GOOD FRIDAY.

ISA. liii. 11.

“ He shall bear their iniquities.”

WHAT words can we say, brethren, what thoughts can we employ ourselves in, what tokens of reverential love and thanks can we give, at all meet for the great work which we have in hand this day, this Good Friday, in one sense the best of all days to us, this double birthday of mankind? For on the first Friday that ever was, Adam was created pure and good after God's own Image; and on this, the best Friday that ever was, or can be, we the sinful and fallen children of Adam obtained in a manner a right to be new-created after the same image, through the Death and Passion of Him Who made Himself our second Adam, that He might be the father of eternal life to us, as the first Adam had been the father of sin and death? What may we say, do or think, at all worthy of so great a thing? Alas! nothing. It is all beyond us: we cannot keep Good Friday as it deserves to be kept; but at least, through God's mercy, we may be humble and thankful: we may watch and pray, that He would give us such sense,

as we can have, of our own misery and His mercy; we may pray to have such a good mind, and watch that we lose it not, hinder it not, by any wilful fault or neglect of our own. As for *entirely* understanding Good Friday, and feeling *worthily* of what was done on the Cross, *that* is out of the question, until we come to the eternal world. We must know what Heaven and Hell really are, before we can properly love and thank Him Who died to save us from Hell and to purchase Heaven for us.

But it is better not to lose ourselves in mere wonder, but rather to fix on some one point of this great Mystery, and try to have true and distinct thoughts about *it*, thoughts of love and thoughts of penitence. And the first and leading thought, coming of itself, I suppose, into our minds, when we sit down to meditate quietly on the Passion of Jesus Christ, the first thought is, He taketh our sins on Himself, in order that they may be taken away from us. We were burdened, and He relieved us of our burden, relieved us by taking it on His own shoulders. We were condemned, and bearing our cross, and He came and took the Cross upon Himself, carried it to the end, suffered and died upon it. We could not rid ourselves of the burden: it was bound upon us by God's eternal law, "a the soul that sinneth, it shall die." "b In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." To redeem our souls would cost more than we could do: without some help from beyond ourselves we must have let that alone for ever. Therefore Holy Scripture, our Father's condescending word, is so very particular in telling us over and over in all

^a Ezek. xviii. 4.

^b Gen. ii. 17.

manner of ways, that we are not left to ourselves to bear our own iniquities. The Good Samaritan has come by, the wounded man is not left by the roadside to perish. The Prophet said, "He shall bear their iniquities:" S. John said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away," beareth away with Him, "the sin of the world." Himself spake of laying us on His shoulders, when we were lost and He had found us. His Apostle said, Himself "bare our sins in His own Body on the Tree." And in order to set this one truth only before us all in every possible way, the law, many ages before, had ordained that it should be set forth in the sacrifices of God's people: appointing things to be done continually, of which, when we Christians read, we are wonderfully reminded and assured of the true meaning of our Lord's Death, His bearing our burden, our sin and our punishment for us.

This, as I have pointed out to you repeatedly in the course of the week, was represented in all the sin offerings of the Tabernacle by the priest or worshipper laying his hand on the head of the animal, and so devoting it to God, and laying as it were his own sins upon it, that by its death it might in some sense endure what he had deserved. But the same was more especially set forth in the solemn services of that one day in the year, which the Jews called the Feast of Atonement or Expiation. It was the tenth day of the seventh month, about the tenth of our September, and it answered to Good Friday, as the Passover answers to Easter, and the Feast of weeks, or Pentecost, to Whitsuntide. For on that day the

^c S. John i. 29.

^d 1 S. Pet. ii. 24.

high priest was to make expiation or atonement for himself and for the whole people, and for the Tabernacle or Temple also, so far as it might have been polluted by their sins. He was solemnly to offer sin-offerings with especial ceremonies for the sins of the whole year, and the offerings and ceremonies were so ordered, that, as we read or hear of them, we are continually reminded of what our Lord did and suffered for us, on this His great Day of Sacrifice. They were ordered on purpose so to remind us of Christ. All parts of the law, all the Mosaical ceremonies, were so ordered on purpose by the Holy Ghost, but the services of the Day of Atonement were so more especially. This we know by the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which S. Paul explains the principal part of those services, adding that the Holy Ghost by them signified so and so concerning Christ.

Now the special point of our Lord bearing our sins is brought in again and again in the course of the ceremonies of that day: as you will perceive, if I give you some short account of them out of the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus.

Before all, the reason is set down, why this service was necessary. The Tabernacle was divided, as you know, into the holy place, and the most holy. Aaron might not come within the most holy place, except on one particular day in the year, on which it was necessary to make atonement for it, because it was defiled by the sins of the people, among whom it was placed. As S. Paul says, “^eThe priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the

^e Heb. ix. 6, 7.

service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone, once every year." Then, since the high priest was himself a sinner, how could he come before God and be guiltless? This was the special point, for which the sacrifices of the day provided. You will see, as I mention them, how each of them, one by one, does, as it were, preach to us of Christ and His Cross, Christ bearing our iniquities. First, it was an atonement for all the people; and our Lord's Death is the One Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. He died for us and for all mankind. He is the Saviour of all men. His own word is, "Come unto Me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden." And His purpose in being lifted up from the earth was to draw *all* men unto Him. "*All* men," my brethren; think of that word *All*. Who is among us that is a grievous sinner, that knows things concerning himself which, for the world, he would not have known to those who love him best; who feels from the heart, that he has cast away and destroyed himself, that he must meet his God and dares not meet Him as he is? Let such an one know assuredly that *here* is a sure refuge and defence; a Physician, Who is sure to heal; a Friend, Who can never forsake; a Helper, Who will bear all their burden, if they will let Him. And again, as no one person among the Jews was shut out from this yearly atonement, so neither was there any one sin among their sins, for which the atonement was not accepted. For the Lord's word is, "For *all* their sins." Think again of this word "*all*," and when you have made the worst of your own trans-

^f S. Matt. xi. 28.

gressions, as if you try to think truly of them you surely will do, know of a surety that the very worst is not too bad for Him to bear, if only it be sincerely brought before Him, truly confessed and repented of. And then observe the special effect of these sins. They make us unfit to see God. For as our Lord said, “[§] Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;” so we may surely understand Him to mean, Cursed are the impure in heart, for they cannot see God. This is evidently set forth by Aaron’s being forbidden to come into the inner sanctuary without that which should atone for his sins. But why was this to be once a year only? Because, the whole year being a figure of all time, this sacrifice of expiation coming only once in the year was to represent to us the true Expiation, our Lord’s dying on the Cross. Now *that* could only take place once. Once, and once for all, such are the words of Holy Scripture. And why was the priest not to enter in without blood? S. Paul told us clearly, the day before yesterday. Because Christ by His own Blood (of which the blood of the goats and calves was a figure) was to enter in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. In fact, this part of the ceremony takes us far beyond Good Friday, even to Ascension Day, for then it was that the Great High Priest entered into the Eternal Sanctuary, with His own Body and Blood, Which He is now there offering to His Father, day and night, for us sinners. But what was this blood which Aaron brought into the sanctuary? It was the blood of two sin-offerings, severally brought in.

[§] S. Matt. v. 8.

The first for Aaron's own sin, for which he was to slay a bullock; the second for the people's sin, for which he was to slay a goat. This means that priests, as well as people, of course need atonement for their sins, and must not dare offer for the people, until they have gone the right way to obtain pardon for their sins. Now of course these two sin-offerings were slain in the same manner as other sin-offerings; i. e. the hands of the priest or worshipper were laid upon them, and so their sins were passed over, as it were, to the dumb creatures, in token that all sin would be hereafter passed over to the true Sin-Offering, Christ Who should come to bear our iniquities.

Well, the priest is to bring this blood within the veil, and there to sprinkle it; but one thing is very remarkable; that even the blood was not sufficient by itself. He was also to bring incense, for a sweet savour. The law is, "^h he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." What is this incense? It is Prayer; the prayer of believing penitent people, offered by our Great High Priest along with His own Blood before the Mercy Seat in Heaven. As Aaron would have died, though he was bringing the blood with him, if he entered the Holy of Holies without the Incense, so our hope even in Christ is vain, if we do not offer Him continually the sweet incense of sincere prayer, to be presented by Him to His Father.

^h Lev. xvi. 12, 13.

Next to the incense, comes the sprinkling of blood. Seven times he was to sprinkle it before the mercy seat east-ward, i. e., as it were in front of the Altar : seven times, in token of completeness, that all kinds of sin might be atoned for. This being done, both with that blood which was to make atonement for himself, and with that which was to make atonement for the people, the service within the veil was finished ; but not all the service of the Day. A very remarkable part remained, which I have not now time to explain ; but I will endeavour to explain it in the eveningⁱ. One thing more, however, I must now mention. It is especially ordered that while Aaron was in the holy place, so making reconciliation for his own and the people's sins, he should be the only person there. “^j There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself and for all the congregation of Israel.” Now, why was this? Surely for the same reason which I mentioned yesterdayⁱ, when I had to give an account of the worshipper not partaking at all of the sacrifice of the sin-offering. It was to shew us that our Lord suffering for us would tread that winepress alone. It was a work, which none other in Heaven or in earth could do ; no, not the smallest part of it. Neither Saint nor Angel could do any thing in the way of really atoning for sin, in sacrifice and intercession which should be really meritorious. But as the Church continually reminds us, “By His

ⁱ These two sermons were delivered without being written, or without any notes now remaining.

^j Lev. xvi. 17.

meritorious Cross and Passion," and by that alone, we obtain remission of our sins.

Wherefore, as Moses said to the people when they were by the Red Sea^k, Stand still, my brethren, and see the salvation which our Lord is working for you to-day. Stand still in your too eager pursuit of the things of this present world, your hot unscrupulous chase of gain, or pleasure, or whatever it may be: pause at least for this little moment, and reflect what is going on, what great things are being done, and being done for you. Behold, the Lord is come down from His Place; He hath made Himself one of you; He hath become-sin for you, though He knew no sin: He hath entered into the Holy of Holies and there He stands ready with His own precious Blood: ready to sprinkle it before the Father, and make atonement for all your sins, if you will but supply Him with the incense of penitent prayer; if you will but breathe to Him one earnest and humble cry, "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me." Shall we go on destroying ourselves, when He offers us such help? O, try in earnest: lift up your heart but this once. Remember the great penitent of this day. You do not know how great a blessing may, by God's infinite mercy, follow, if you will but, this one good day, set your hearts to seek Him in earnest; if you will but really endeavour and pray that you may say in your heart, We indeed, whatever we suffer, suffer it justly: it is "the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss." "Do thou then, O crucified Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom^m."

^k Ex. xiv. 13.

^l S. Luke xxiii. 41.

^m Ib. 42.

SERMON XV.

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS.

GOOD FRIDAY.

HOSEA xiv. 7.

*“They that dwell under His shadow shall return ;
they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine :
the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.”*

FRAIL imperfect beings as we are, when these Holy seasons call upon us to remember our best and only Friend, even those who are sincere and earnest find it very very hard to preserve anything like the tone of thought which they desire. Like one who is weak in voice, but has something of an ear for music, we labour in vain to keep up our thoughts and ways to the note which the Church strikes for us : and some, too many alas ! grow altogether weary of trying, and permit themselves quietly to fall back into the ways and thoughts of ordinary and common weeks. They pass by, as if it were nothing to them, (as the common people of Jerusalem did,) whilst their Lord and Saviour, entirely for their sake, is agonizing, betrayed, dragged along, bound, condemned, spit upon, buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified, and while He pours out His soul unto death. Too often has it been so with most of us : but none of

us surely would wish it to be so always. Surely some of us earnestly desire, at such a time as this, to have humble and holy thoughts in our hearts, wherewith to watch by our humble and holy Saviour. But our spirits seem to wander and trifle in spite of all we can do: we wish to attend, we wish to feel; we wish to meditate and pray; but we do not know how.

My brethren, this great spiritual comfort, of conscious, active devotion at holy times, like all other real spiritual comforts, is not usually to be obtained without difficulty and self-denial. If we would meditate, pray, communicate, earnestly and fervently at Easter-time, we must keep up earnestness and fervour, as best we may, at *all* times. We must greatly fear allowing our Christmas and Easter feelings to dry up and vanish away, as soon as Christmas and Easter are over. Nay, the only comfortable way is, as soon as Christmas ends to look forward to Easter, and as soon as Easter ends to look forward to Whitsuntide, and so on to Christmas again: in short to consider each successive season, each participation in Holy Communion, as a step towards the next following; until we come to our last Communion, the next step to which, by God's mercy, will be Paradise. This is the plain and simple way: this will bring all our Christian doings to a point: not to suffer our hearts and minds to wander too far from Christ at ordinary times, and then, when the Holy Time arrives, simply to sit down under the shadow of His Cross, which is indeed our only sure refuge on earth. To bethink ourselves, Now our good Saviour is nearer than usual: now is the time to come near with all the desire of our souls, and commit ourselves to Him entirely,

without reserve ; to quiet our earthly cares and fears, and assuage even our sad remorse for past sins and present infirmities, by the thought, We are sitting beneath His Cross, under His safe and refreshing Shadow, Who is the stay of the feeble, the refuge of the affrighted, the shelter of the lost and homeless, the only Healer of broken hearts. “^a Under His shadow we shall live;” that is, under the shadow of His Cross. For He is that Man, that second Adam, Who was ordained of old to shelter us from the overflowing evils which the first Adam brought upon us: to “^b be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land.” And as those who take on themselves in their kindness to shelter others, do of course expose themselves to the fury of the storm, so He, our heavenly Shield and Shelter, had to meet in His single Person all the fiery darts of the Wicked one: to bear, on His own unprotected Head, all the burden and heat of God’s Day of wrath, poured on Him because we had deserved it. All the pain and agony due to our sinful flesh, He willed to undergo it this day in His most pure and innocent Body, that He might redeem our bodies, and make them, in the end, like unto His. And it was His will that *we* should know this; *we*, I say, who are here present. Thousands and millions have lived and died without ever hearing of Him and His Cross: but *we* know it, *we* know Who He is, what He suffered, and that He suffered all for *us*: that blessed Cross is before our eyes. You heard the Prophet say it just now, “as the shadow of a great Rock in a

^a Lam. iv. 20.^b Isa. xxxii. 2.

weary land." The weary land is this life, this earth; "weary," because it has nothing of its own but what will very soon tire the soul: "weary," because we try one thing after another, and all fails, nothing satisfies, all is "vanity and vexation of spirit:" weary, because there is no real rest in it: it is like the wild, waste, barren, scorching wilderness, where Hagar wandered with her child, and when the scanty drop of water was spent, which mere human pity had afforded her, she could but lay her child on the earth and cast herself down to die: but an Angel called to her, and shewed her a fountain of water, and made her very merciful promises: so the Church, God's Angel or Prophet on earth, points out to us this one cool place of shelter, this one refuge from the storm, and shadow from the heat, this one great Rock in a weary land, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." We have heard His Name; we know in our hearts, that He is our Saviour, we know that He is most ready to stand our friend, though the whole world of bad men and bad spirits be against us, and worse than all, our own corrupt and treacherous flesh.

But then, brethren, we must come and sit under His shadow, and being there, there we must stay: we must not wilfully wander away from it. The Great Rock in the weary land will be no refuge, no comfort at all to the distressed traveller, if he only look at it wistfully from a distance, and content himself with wishing that he were close to it, instead of making the best of his way. And even if he should have rested for a while beneath it, all the benefit will be lost, if he wilfully move from under its shade; in pursuit, may be, of something that takes his fancy,

and so, without any necessity, allow the hot sun at noon to beat directly upon his head. So the Cross of Christ will be to thee only a name, as long as thou takest no trouble to draw nigh to it. And even if thou shouldst at some time have begun to approach it, if the death of a friend, for instance, or thine own sickness, or a holy season like this, should bring with it, graver thoughts, and thou shouldst have had some earnest sense of What Jesus Is and what He suffered, as also of thyself, what thou art, for whom He suffered, and how grievous thy doings have been, very much worse than ever they appeared to thee before : I say, if God in His mercy *has* put such meditations as these into thy heart, yet is it not too true, that thy foolish heart has too soon parted with them, and has too eagerly welcomed back the vain thoughts and dreams of this world, and the sayings of foolish companions ? Well then, God's word will inform you what you were doing. You were wandering, inexcusably wandering, from under the shadow of the Great Rock, and bringing upon yourself anew all the troubles of the weary land. Therefore the Prophet Hosea, when he sets himself to describe the happy state of a true Christian, speaks of him not merely as *being* but as *dwelling* under the Cross. "They that *dwell* under His shadow shall return," that is, they shall go on practising true repentance : they shall finally and for ever return unto *Him*, from Whom they had once fallen by iniquity. To have this blessing, you must *dwell*, that is, abide, stay, pass the rest of your life, under the shadow of your Saviour's Cross. You must not so come to Him in Holy Week, or at Easter, as to leave Him again, when

the ordinary Sundays begin. No, His meaning is, that at this time you should draw nearer than usual to His Cross and meditate *in earnest* on what is going on there. And if in earnest you contemplate it, it can hardly pass from your mind soon. For only recollect what that is, which is going on upon the Cross, and appointed us for us to meditate upon, as we sit under the Cross. The Creator of the world and of man, enduring without relief the unspeakable burden of the world's misery and man's sin! He Who will soon appear on His Throne of Glory, to judge men and Angels, giving Himself up for the time, as though He were a mere helpless criminal, to the malice and insolence of evil men and devils! And all this done and endured that you, you the very persons that are sitting here, and hearkening to the Gospel of the Cross, *you* might be saved from everlasting ruin, and be made happy with God for ever, and that such and such sins which you committed at such a time, still, alas! it may be, defiling your conscience, may be forgiven and blotted out, and true holiness take possession of your heart, and dwell in their place and make you happy. And you are but one of the many tens of millions of sinners, and your sins, however many, but a few of the thousands of millions of sins, which were all in His heart at the time: and for all He was making atonement, not one excepted. Who is sufficient for these thoughts? The highest saint can reach no higher. Yet by His exceeding mercy, they are within reach of the meanest sinner, who will accept Christ's offer, and come to Him, that he may have life.

Yes, my poor brother or sister, poor fallen child of

Adam, whoever thou art, though thy ways have been ever so corrupt and wilful, though thou have abused ever so gracious calls, ever such abundant opportunities and helps to goodness; though, for ever so many years, He have been lifted up in thy sight, and thou hast hung back and refused to be drawn unto Him; though thou have, ever since thou canst remember, dealt proudly and scornfully with His ordinances, and resisted the godly motions of His Spirit, like His own rebellious people Israel, turning the back to Him and not the face: yet the gracious word spoken to Israel is also spoken to thee, “^cReturn unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.” Come out of the wicked world, on this good day at least come apart, and rest awhile from its heavy yoke and hard bondage: sit down here with God’s people under the Cross, and look up and see and consider, under Whose shadow thou art sitting. See His arms stretched out, like a tender Father’s, to bless and embrace thee; the nails are not so strong to fasten them in their painful position, as the love of His sinful brethren which fills His sacred Heart, and causes Him so to reach His hands out towards thee. Thou art one of His sinful brethren; He loves thee among the rest; He knows thee by name, doubt it not, as He doth all whom He loveth. Look round and see who are with thee under His Shadow: and when thou seest His Blessed Mother, His beloved and loving disciple, the other holy women, and with them in spirit the whole multitude of true believers, say not in thine heart, Alas! these are all of them glorious saints, how can my portion be with theirs?

^c Hos. xiv. 1.

but see if there is not among them one who had sometime before been a sinner in the city ; one laden with many sins, one out of whom had gone seven devils. Think of the Magdalen under the Cross, forgiven because she loved much, and not only forgiven, but exalted to be a glorious saint : and assure thyself, that if thou in thy humble measure wilt strive to follow her blessed example, if thou wilt not depart from under the shadow of the Cross, but wilt abide there, sitting over against the Sepulchre, endeavouring to love much because thy Lord suffers so much for thee, thou wilt be forgiven as she was ; thou wilt have a portion in her blessing : the Cross will give out some of its sweetness to thee : by and by thou too wilt be able to say with the Holy Church, “^d I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.”

Would you know, what is the fruit of this Tree of Life ? the precious fruit, thus graciously offered to the worst of us ? Give ear to God’s Prophet telling you something of it. “^e I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely : for Mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel : he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.” Truly indeed hath the Scripture said, “^f in the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden,” a spiritual garden, whose growth is all manner of blessings ; a Paradise, with every tree that is good for food and pleasant to the eyes. There is the lily with all pure and beautiful flowers, the token of the Blessed Virgin

^d Cant. ii. 3.^e Hos. xiv. 4—6.^f S. John xix. 41.

and of all whom the Spirit of Christ hath made pure in heart: there is the olive, denoting the abundance of the gifts of the same Spirit; there is the fragrance as of the cedar forest in Lebanon, the odour of love and all good works. S. Mary Magdalen brings it with her now, when she weeps at her dying Lord's feet, as she had before brought very precious ointment to anoint His living feet. Such are the fruits of the new Paradise: but observe, all this sweetness and beauty depends entirely on one thing. As the Tree of Life grew in the midst of the old Paradise and caused it to be what it was, so the Cross of Christ in the midst of the new Paradise. All the beauty, all the goodness of whatever groweth there, is due to the shadow of the Cross, under which it groweth. Therefore the Prophet goes on and says, (still addressing himself more especially to the humble penitent) "They that dwell under His shadow shall return:" i.e., they shall repent more and more, He will draw them nearer and nearer to Himself. Only they must abide there. They must no more return to folly, but must go on returning to God. Do thou so dwell, do thou so return continually, and thy portion will be sure in all the precious things which the Prophet goes on to mention. "Thou shalt revive as the corn;" thy hopes and comforts and virtues, which seemed all dead and gone, as a corn of wheat cast into the ground, and seeming all the winter as though it were lost, will grow and flourish again, and bear fruit abundantly. God will quicken the remnant of grace in thee: thou shalt live by the Bread of life.

Again He saith, "they shall grow and blossom as the vine;" the True Vine, whereof "the Father is the

husbandman." They will be beautiful in the sight of Angels: cheering God and man with their holy obedience. Their "scent," the odour of their good works, "shall be as the wine of Lebanon;" perfumed wine, wine and incense together, worthy to be a memorial sacrifice joined with the Great Memorial of Christ's death, and to be presented with it by the High Priest in Heaven.

I would speak to those, whose hearts God hath touched: they will know how to answer me. I would ask of them, "O ye who desire to be penitents, who find the shadow of the Cross refreshing, what fruit had ye of your old sins, the things of which you are now ashamed, to make them worth continuing in to keep you back from such joy as this? Why go back to the shadow of Egypt, in which the Jews vainly trusted of old, or to the shadow of the king of Babylon, in which the heathen people thought to find refuge? All such the fire of the Lord will consume, as thorns and briars. Why trust in the world, or the devil, and forsake the shadow of the Cross, to which all the Promises are made, and under which all the elect abide?" O Lord, give us better minds, on this Thine own Good Day!

SERMON XVI.

THE DRAWING OF THE CROSS.

GOOD FRIDAY.

S. JOHN xii. 32.

*“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw
all men unto Me.”*

WHY do we call Jesus Christ our Saviour? There is not one of us, I daresay, but knows Him by that Name. There is, I trust, no one in this Church, neither man, woman nor child, (except there might happen here and there to be an infant in its mother's arms) there is not one, but has some sort of special feeling, dim and cloudy and indistinct enough, no doubt, in too many of us, but still some kind of feeling, we should have towards that holy Name, Christ Jesus, our Saviour, different from what we should have towards any other name, as often as we hear it spoken, and attended to it at all. Somehow or other, we have come to know, and we do know in the bottom of our hearts, that He is something more to us than any besides can be. We own Him as our Saviour, our best Friend, although, alas! our poor worldly hearts are very far from feeling or understanding the deep and high and blessed meaning of that most holy Name.

And there is one thing more, which we all surely

have some idea of, more or less: we all know that Jesus Christ became our Saviour especially *by His Death*. We call Him our Saviour, not because so long as He lived upon earth He went about doing good; not because He spake as never man spake; witnessed the truth as never angel witnessed it; not because He preached the Gospel to the poor, because He was sent to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised: not because, wheresoever He came, He healed every sickness and every disease, casting out devils, cleansing lepers, forgiving sinners, raising the dead; nor yet because, since His departure out of this world, His Name through faith in His Name has wrought all manner of spiritual miracles, converting the heathen, humbling the proud, purifying the unclean, perfecting saints, creating every where peace on earth and good will towards men: not for any nor for all of these His saving works do we especially call Him our Saviour; but it is because He died for us, died for us on the Cross: died freely, died willingly, poured out His soul unto death: and died on the Cross by the most cruel and shameful of deaths, the most hateful and distressing to flesh and blood, that special kind of death which in His prophetic word He had long before declared to be accursed. This death He chose to die, when with a word speaking, nay a mere thought of His Will, He might have delivered Himself and swept His enemies from the face of the earth: as He shewed by what He did at the very time, striking them down when they came to take Him, and with a touch healing one of them who was

wounded. And for whom did He die? Why was He so determined to suffer? For rebels and enemies, for traitors and scorers of His Name, for the very persons who were in the act of driving their cruel nails through His Body, and for those all around, perhaps yet more cruel and wicked, who were blaspheming and insulting over Him. For them He prayed, and for them He died: but if it were for them only, that would not make Him *our* Saviour. Well might we wonder at such charity, well might we with amazed and loving hearts fall down and worship the Son of God, so devoting Himself for His worst enemies: but it would not draw our hearts towards Him, as now we know they ought to be drawn. That can only be by our knowing and believing that He, the Eternal Son of God, died this fearful death for us; for every one of us: I, you, the person next to you on your right hand and on your left; your acquaintance and friends, each one of them; the persons whom you most care for in life. Our Blessed Lord died for all and each, as truly as He died for those around Him, for whom in men's hearing He was praying on the very Cross. Think of it, my brethren; set your minds to it, as well as you can: know it for a certainty, and keep it steadily before your minds' eye, that that Holy and Blessed One had you, you individually, at that moment in His heart: He thought of you, He thought of your sins, He thought of what the end of those sins must and would be, if He did not interfere to save you by suffering for you: and so for you He gave Himself up. He bore the burthen of your sins, which must else have lain upon your shoulders, a sore burthen indeed, too too heavy for you to bear:

a burden which had it not been for His mercy would have pressed you down lower and lower in the bottomless pit for ever. He knew you beforehand by name, and all that you would do: what commandments you would break, and how inexcusably; what warnings and tokens from Him you would set at nought; how you would grieve, vex, affront His good and gracious Spirit. He knew it all, yet He loved you so dearly, as willingly to endure all the torments of this sad night and day, that you might be forgiven and saved. This, this is what we ought to feel indeed! This ought to win your heart and mine, as it has millions of sinners' hearts in all times and all parts of the Church. This is the hope, the only hope of our souls. This, Christ's suffering on the Cross, is what we all profess to depend on, and I trust, dear brethren, we do depend on it. How weak and unworthy soever our feelings may be, I do trust that we are all so Christian, as quite to believe that Christ is our only Saviour, and we could have no hope of getting to heaven but by Him. I trust this the rather, because I see that you make a point of coming together in larger numbers on Good Friday than on any other day in the year. I accept it, my brethren, as a token given to your Lord, that you do really in the bottom of your hearts feel *some* wish to be His; you could not be altogether contented to do *quite* without Him in the world. But O, consider, I most earnestly beseech you, what the consequence must surely be, if you go on no better than at present, contented and well-pleased with yourself to have Good Friday the one only day in the year, on which you make a point of coming to meet Christ here

in His Church. Our Lord did not buy you with His own Blood, that you might serve Him by being outwardly present here for an hour or two this day, and away from Him and His service, following the world the flesh and the devil, all the other days of the year, perhaps of your life. O, think better of it; and let the Cross which you have this day seen once more lifted up among us, let the remembrance of that Cross abide with you when you leave Church, accompany you all the way home, enter with you into your home; may it keep on, haunting and disturbing you, and not permitting you to be easy in your sins: till the love of Christ have constrained you to come here a second, and then a third time, and so on until by His infinite mercy the Holy Spirit has given you a heart to come regularly and to serve Him only and entirely.

But I must speak, not to those only, who come here on this good day alone, but to the rest also, who are more regular in serving God: and I would wish to point out to them how exactly we see fulfilled, this day and before our eyes, what our Blessed Lord and Saviour prophesied concerning His Cross as it were last Sunday, the Sunday before His Death. He then told the multitude and His disciples, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." They understood Him to mean His being taken away by a violent death: and they were right: for the Evangelist goes on, and says, "This He said, signifying what death He should die;" namely, that "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," so He, the Son of Man, the second Adam Who was to undo what the first Adam had done, so

He must be lifted up in the sight of all men; lifted up on the Cross, high above the heads of the multitude. And what would be the consequence? He would draw all men unto Himself: He would become Himself the precious Fruit of Life, hanging on the Tree of Life, which should attract the children of Adam; fallen as they were, overcoming, as it were, by a good Temptation the bad and fatal temptation which drew our first parents towards the forbidden tree. He was, as He told them at the same time, as a corn of wheat, which, except it ^afall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." You know it is so, my brethren, if you multiply a grain of corn and get fruit from it, you must hide it out of your sight in the earth, and there it must, in a manner, moulder away and mingle with the earth: else, however sound and healthy it may be, whatever life may lie hidden in it, it remains alone, it bears no fruit. In order to bear fruit, it must submit to a kind of death and burial: and so, our Lord told them, "it must be with Me. I must die and be buried, and after that, souls shall be gathered unto Me, and My kingdom will be set up and spread; but it all depends upon My death. All shall be drawn unto Me, but not, until I am lifted up."

+ My brethren, this day is this Scripture fulfilled, not only in your ears but in your eyes. This day all Christendom over, hundreds of thousands, nay millions of people are gathered in the Churches of God to embrace the blessed Cross and serve Him Who hangeth upon it, i. e., He is lifted up and all men are drawn unto Him, some believing, some half

^a S. John xii. 24.

believing, some alas ! not really believing nor caring, but because they profess and call themselves Christians and feel that they must do as others do. And many thousands, who are bold to neglect the Holy Time altogether, and come not at all to serve Him in His Church, yet know in their hearts that they are wrong, and feel more or less drawn to Him, though they resist His blessed attraction, and in the end turn rudely away : still they are drawn ; and so one way or another He is even now drawing all men to Him.] And we, as I said, are witnesses of it. The simple fact (e. g.,) that in this parish our Good Friday congregation is always the largest congregation in the year, is in its way and in its degree a sign of the power of the Cross, a token of Christ “lifted up from the earth and drawing all men unto Him.”

We are living witnesses to the fulfilment of His great prophecy : but we, I need not tell you, are only a very few of one generation in one place : we are but as a drop in the mighty stream of believers, which began from Calvary, and will flow on through all time, yea, through all Eternity. For even on Calvary, and before the very moment of His Death, the fruits of that Death began to be gathered in : before He had given up the Ghost, my brethren, but not before He was lifted up from the earth. You know whom I mean ; that Penitent Thief. He was the first whom our Crucified God drew to Himself by the power of His Cross. He was the first, but he stands as it were for all ; for if you look to him, to that humble believing malefactor, hanging by our Lord’s side, you will see a pattern and type of all whom our Lord will draw to Him ; a pattern for us, my brethren, how to

keep Good Friday; confessing sin, turning to Christ; looking to Him only for pardon in the world to come, and giving up this world entirely. That penitent was the first fruits, gathered and stored that very day in Paradise. Then came that heathen Centurion, the captain of the band of Roman soldiers, who had been His torturers, mockers, and crucifiers. He, when he heard our Lord's last cry and saw the darkness and the miracles that were done; the earth quaking, the rocks rent, and the graves opened, feared greatly. The dying Saviour so drew that heathen soldier towards Himself, that he both believed in his heart and confessed with his mouth, that which is the sum and substance of the Church's creed, "Certainly this was a righteous man," and yet at the same time, "Truly this Man" this crucified and dying Man, this very man "was the Son of God." Do you see, my brethren, how that stranger and unbeliever was so drawn towards the Cross, that he bore witness, whether fully understanding it or no, to the great mysteries of the Incarnation and Atonement,—God, manifest in the flesh and dying on the Cross for us? Was not this a drawing indeed? And we are not to doubt, nay the Gospel itself shews, that all around in their several ways, believers, unbelievers, indifferent persons, felt drawn the same way; they could not take their eyes off Him; they could not, as we say, think enough of what was happening; the most indifferent smote their breasts, as they went home that night. How could they help it? For they had seen the very sun in the heavens withdraw his light in the noon-day, and they had felt the earth quake and the rocks rend: the graves too had been opened and the veil

of the Temple rent: the very outward heaven and earth, the living and the dead, seemed in some wonderful way to be gathered round that Cross and Him Who hung thereon: so that Jerusalem and Mount Calvary have ever since been accounted a kind of central spot in the whole earth, towards which all men, good and bad, as soon as ever the Gospel is made known to them, have felt themselves forced to look in a wonderful manner. As soon as ever the Cross is lifted up, the eyes of men are somehow drawn towards it: they feel in spite of themselves, that God is dealing with them in a particular way: they cannot be quite so easy as they had been in their sin and unbelief. O well for them in that hour, if, as Christ is surely calling them, so they answer to that call! if as He is calling them, they run after Him! By His grace, such have never been wanting: the multitude of believers has never ceased to gather around the Holy Cross. When He, according to the full meaning of His words, had not only been lifted up on the Cross, but also had been lifted up to heaven on the day of His glorious Ascension, and when, according to another saying of His, not only the Jews had lifted up the Son of Man, but the Apostles also, the Holy Church throughout all the world, had begun to lift Him up by their true and courageous preaching; when they came in by three and five thousand at a time; it was still Christ crucified, God purchasing us with His own Blood; still the doctrine of the Cross which won and drew the hearts of sinners. It was the Lamb led to the slaughter Who drew that eunuch to be baptized by Philip: it was Jesus appearing bodily with His Wounds, Who in a moment

converted Saul. So it was then, so it is now, so it will be to the world's end. If you and I are to be saved, it must be by following His lead, by coming when He draws, by surrendering yourself, soul and body, to Him Who kept back nothing from you. You are now under the shadow, under the attraction of Christ on the Cross. Will you give way to it or no? If you refuse, you must nevertheless look by and by both upon the Cross and on Him Who hung on it; both on the Sign of the Son of Man and on the Son of Man Himself. For it is written " ^bThey shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced." So that, one way or another, that Cross must be all in all to you. It must, and will draw you to itself either for life or for everlasting death. O my brother, choose life. Do not separate yourself from the blessed company of those who are drawn upwards by redeeming Love. Choose life, and choose it now. Choose Christ, Who is your Life, and choose Him now on His own Day. Whatever others do, let your Lord now behold in you the travail of His soul, the fruit of His Passion, the fruit which He longs for, and without which He will not be satisfied. Deny not yourself to Him Who died to save you.

^b Zech. xii. 10.

SERMON XVII.

OUR NEGLECT OF THE CROSS.

GOOD FRIDAY.

LAM. i. 12.

“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger.”

WELL indeed may He ask the question of us, and well may we stand amazed and affrighted to think of the only answer we can make. All this week, my brethren, now as in all former years, He has been set forth suffering among us. We have learned out of the holy lessons, how He vouchsafed for our sakes to bear sad and wearying disappointment; to seek fruit, and find none, what a sad burthen of evil forebodings He carried about with Him in His Sacred Bosom, knowing, as He did all along, how the world would refuse to be saved by Him: how He was pierced through and through by the ingratitude of men, especially of Judas: how fearful the anguish and agony, to which He submitted in His conflict with the Powers of darkness, when their hour had again come. Of all this we have heard and seen something since Sunday last: in all this He hath

been asking our sympathy; and how far we have felt with Him, He only knows. But to-day He calls upon us to feel for Him in a trouble, in which nature herself, one would think, will hardly permit us to say it is nothing to us. To-day He is lifted up before us in pain, and in death: stripped, pierced, bleeding, giving up the Ghost. Now, all of us know something about bodily pain: and although we none of us know what death is, yet we know that we must all die: and we shrink from our own pain and death. Nature teaches us to do so; naturally also we take pity on others, in their pain and death. And yet how has it been with us to-day, in respect of the pain and death of our Lord and Saviour? How much notice have we taken of it? how many times have we really thought of it to-day? We have, some of us, perhaps most of us, been to Church: so far was well: but did we set our minds in earnest to think of Him and His Cross, while we were there? And has the remembrance of Him really dwelt on our minds during the hours when we were out of Church? Has it made any difference to us, in refreshment, in talk, in diversions? Have we fasted, I do not now say from food according to the Church's rule, but from greediness, from fretful and discontented words, from uttering and listening to evil reports of others? Surely in these respects some little caution, more than usual, would have been good for us on this comfortable yet awful day. If a dear friend or relation had just died, we should scarcely have the heart to take the same liberties as usual. It was no good sign, if we have gone about just as if nothing had happened, now on the day when our Lord and

our God laid down His life for us. And if the good day has made us a little careful, what likelihood is there of the good impression remaining upon our minds? Will it not too soon pass away, and His sorrows, and our own souls' dangers, become as nothing in our minds?

Such forgetfulness is but too likely: we know it by our own sad and shameful experience. But, my brethren, why should it be so? Why should those sorrows, to which no other sorrow ever was like, why should they be as nothing to so many of us, as we pass on our way? We may partly understand this by imagining how it was at Jerusalem, on that first and most awful Good Friday. There were great crowds in the city at that time: for it was the Feast of the Passover, when they came in from every quarter. No doubt many were coming and going along the road which led from Pilate's hall to the Mount Calvary; the sad and mournful way by which He travelled to the place of His Death. And besides, there followed Him a great company of people: the same, no doubt, many of them, who at the prompting of the Chief Priests had raised the cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him:" and many perhaps besides these; for our Lord's apprehension and trial had come to be very generally known; it was the chief thing going on in Jerusalem in those days. Imagine then this crowd, and any chance comers beside, how they stood at different distances, round the three Crosses which were erected side by side in the place called Golgotha, close to the garden where Joseph had been making him a new tomb. Imagine how they might be employed. There might be children going to

their play, grown people to their work : some might be on their way to see their friends ; some turning their steps towards some place, where they promised themselves feasting and diversions : others might be in pursuit of their several objects, whatever their hearts were set on, for gain or for pleasure. And there might be many of these, who would just pass by, and hardly give a look to the sad and dismal things which were going on ; or, if they did turn aside, they would very likely soon turn away again : according to the dislike, which almost all men naturally have to the looking on persons in pain, or on anything shocking and unsightly. They would not stop to gaze on crucified malefactors, such as our Blessed Lord, no less than the two thieves, would appear to them. And so was fulfilled the melancholy prophecy of Isaiah : “ He hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” “ We hid as it were our faces from Him : He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”

Now, if it was natural in those persons to turn away from the sight of a suffering Saviour, it is no less natural for the generality, now and in all times, to turn away from the thought and remembrance of Him. Men have their own cares and amusements, and they do not like to be called away from them to contemplate anything that seems to them so dismal and melancholy. Our nature is the same with that of the multitudes who were in sight of the Cross ; and if they, taken up with other things, paid little regard to what was going on there, so we, in such measure as we have allowed the world and the flesh

to take possession of our souls, are but too sure to turn away from the Cross of Christ. We may not be in what is called notorious sin, we may not seem to ourselves or others to mean any great harm; but if we are taken up with things present, if we have not learned to care for our souls, His Cross will be in reality nothing to us; and we, if we had lived then, should most likely have passed it scornfully by.

But there is another thing to disgust people, and weary them of our Lord's saving Cross, much more than their natural shrinking from things painful and uncomely: and *that* is the sad leaning of us all towards open and direct sin. For consider, brethren, the true meaning of what you see going on upon the Cross. Why is the Eternal Son of God, God the Son, the Second Person in the Most Holy Trinity, why is He thus become visible in a Body of Flesh, a Body of veins, nerves, bones, and sinews, a poor frail suffering body, just as frail, just as liable to suffering, as that of any tender new-born child, or decaying person on a sick bed? Why, having this Body, has He permitted His cruel enemies to seize it, to drive their un pitying nails through it, to hang it up on its wounds, crowned with thorns, exposed to shame, with nothing but gall and vinegar to refresh it? Why doth the Great God of heaven and earth permit Himself to be so treated? His Love is the cause of it: His tender love for us. He bears it all, because it is the fore-ordained way to make atonement for sin, and "a to bring in everlasting righteousness." The Sufferings of Christ on the Cross are the appointed remedy for sin: therefore he who would keep

^a Dan. ix. 24.

us in sin (and you know who *that* is) he of course will set us against the Cross. Satan would rather have us look any way than towards Mount Calvary. If we are going along the road, following the stream of this world's ordinary life, he will whisper, "It is not worth while stopping to look at what is going on here. At least, it is not worth while *now*: you may go on your way for the present, and come and look on this at your leisure." But if, by God's merciful grace and providence, your attention *is* turned to the Cross, then Satan will do his best to hinder you from getting any good by it, how near soever you may be to it, how distinctly soever you may be thinking of it. How can Satan manage that? Very easily, brethren, if we will let him. Do you not see these many hundreds or thousands, the mob of Jerusalem, how they follow our Lord to the Cross, not in pity, but in scorn and spite? And what good can they get by it, except through a miracle of grace? And it is but too possible for something like this to take place now. For, observe what I say, that person is not a true believer, a true lover of the Cross of Christ, who is not moved by it to take up his own cross; that is, to renounce his sins, and lead a strict life, how dear soever it may seem to cost him. Now, a great many, who come to the Cross in our days, come to it, expecting to be somehow forgiven and saved by it, without denying themselves, without real holiness. If they can but feel happy, and put their trust in our Lord, they think they are safe, and their friends think them safe, although perhaps they have had nothing at all to try their sincerity: they have given up nothing

for Christ; have submitted to nothing: not even to the passing shame and bitterness of making special confession of their sins to the person appointed by God to absolve them. Yes, brethren, with grief of heart it must be said, too often in the very last hours of life has one heard such words as these spoken by the sick bed in the hearing of the patient, and when death was close at hand after a careless ungodly life; too often even in such cases, may one hear the well-meaning but ignorant say; "He bears no malice, and he feels quite happy, and so no doubt all is right." All *may* be right, but how can one know it in such cases? Surely if the devil can prevail on Christians to live and die in this way of thinking about the Cross, that if we can but feel happy about it at last, all is right, however we have lived; surely this is giving him his own way with us: and of such Christians we may sorrowfully fear, that even under the Saviour's shadow they will perish: for unless our Saviour Himself made a great mistake, it is but vain trusting in the Cross, unless one in earnest takes up the Cross.

It is a part of the same subtle device of the enemy, when persons are tempted and encouraged to think that their bodily pain and sufferings are a sufficient token of their acceptance at the last, however they may have lived, however wanting they may be in earnest loving sorrow and penitent confession. You shall hear them saying; "It would be a blessed thing, a happy release, if it would please God to take him out of his misery." How do they know it would be a blessed thing, a happy release? Have they known and watched the sick person in his past life, so as to

have a reasonable hope, that, having lived the life, he will die the death of the righteous? Nothing of the kind. They had perhaps no acquaintance with him, nor ever thought of enquiring. Or, worse than that, they know too well that his days of health and entire sense were passed in gross sin, or at least in a wilful distance from God. How then dare they talk so confidently of a happy release? Alas, it is but too plain that they speak without really thinking of another world. They merely mean to express a good-natured wish, that his present bodily pain were over; but as to that sadder and more fearful pain which he may be going to, it hardly comes into their minds; they are so used to think only of this world. Or if they do think at all of the torments threatened to the wicked, they put away the alarm as well as they can, trying to persuade themselves, and encourage their sick friend to imagine, that it is very unlikely God should punish him in this world, and in the other too. And in this way again Satan has his will of the poor sufferer, as he had of that impenitent thief who was crucified at our Saviour's side. That unhappy man stands in Holy Scripture for an example to all generations, how vain it is to think of God's forgiving, merely because we have suffered much: as his holy and blessed companion, the Penitent Thief, is a sure token how the Lord will crown the suffering that changes the heart. The cross of the one, for anything that we read, was as painful as that of the other: both their legs were broken alike: the difference between them was that one died blaspheming, the other penitent: no one of course could ever say of the wicked one, "It was a happy release, a good

thing that he was taken out of his misery." And if he had not been so bad as to blaspheme, but had only died in dull carelessness, with his Gracious Master so close at hand, and even then pouring out His Soul unto death for his sake, who could have been so bold as to take comfort for him ?

But we will hope better things of you, dearly beloved in the Lord : we will hope and trust, that as, by a kind of custom of the parish, you assemble this day in greater numbers than on any other day in the year, (and surely if one could come on one day, *this* would be the day that a loving believer would choose) I say we will hope and trust, that He Whom you so acknowledge will, in His overflowing goodness, acknowledge you, and pour out a special blessing upon every one of you : that as you have not altogether passed Him by, but have at least turned aside for an hour or two, to see this great sight, so you may go home with some real thoughts of the Sorrow which is above all sorrow ; some real dread of the Anger which is above all anger ; some real love of the Mercy which is above all mercy ; which is higher than the heavens, for Its will is to lift us up where Itself is, that is, above all heavens ; which is deeper than hell, for It stooped down to redeem us, all of us, from the very lowest hell. Oh, what could we have done, and where could we have gone, if Jesus Christ had not died for us ? And what *shall* we do, and where *shall* we go, if our stubborn sins should, after all, cause His dying for us to be in vain ?

SERMON XVIII.

SAINT MARY UNDER THE CROSS.

PREACHED ON GOOD FRIDAY, 1842, BEING ALSO THE FEAST OF THE
ANNUNCIATION.

S. JOHN xix. 25.

“There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.”

IT might have been thought that the One Great Un-
speakable Object, which is this day presented to the
eyes of men and Angels, God Incarnate crucified and
dying, should so take up all our regard, that we should
hardly have eyes or ears, or any sort of attention, for
any thing besides. It might almost seem disrespect-
ful, to turn away our thoughts for a moment from Him
Who hangs on the Cross, to any thing else, though
ever so near it. But Holy Scripture teaches us other-
wise, surrounding as it does that glorious and awful
Cross with so many objects more or less closely ap-
proaching it, which it even invites us to look on :
friends and enemies and indifferent spectators ; blas-
phemers and penitents ; Jews and Gentiles ; the earth
quaking and the sun hiding its face, the veil of the
Temple rent in twain, and the very bodies of the
saints which slept, coming out of their graves. All
these things we are to attend to : why else are they

set down in the Gospels? And without due attention to them, we shall be less perfect than we might be, in our thoughts of that great overpowering Object, Who is set in the midst of them, and towards Whom they all look.

And among them all there is one circumstance, which must draw in an especial manner the attention of all thoughtful adorers of our Saviour, because it seems to come nearer to Him, than all the rest: I mean that which is mentioned in the text, "There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother;" she who was the nearest to Him of all created beings; of whom He became Incarnate; concerning whom our Church teaches, that of her substance, in her womb, He took man's nature upon Him; whom, therefore, the whole Church teaches us to call, The Mother of God: she stood by, and beheld Him in all that deep suffering; heard, as it seems, His last words, and saw Him die.

For a mother to be present at the death of an only son, is an affecting thought at any time; a grief too deep and mysterious for any quite to understand, but those who have felt it: but for her who is highly favoured, the Virgin Mother of the Blessed Jesus, to stand by and see Him crucified between two thieves, and hear Him cry out, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" this surely is a secret and mystery of anguish, as much above what ordinary mothers can understand, as their grief is more than can be comprehended by any but mothers.

Therefore the eye of every one, who has but ordinary human feeling, turns of course towards her more especially, among the circumstances of our Lord's Passion: much more the eye of a thoughtful Christian,

believing and considering the unspeakable honour she had received, in becoming the Mother of Him Who is Very God; to such an one, the presence of the Blessed Virgin by the Cross will seem a very remarkable circumstance, setting forth His adorable Providence, in bringing nearest to Him in sufferings, her who was nearest in blood, and whom He most loved and honoured.

And this train of thought, so natural to a Christian in all years, when the Holy Week comes round, seems to come recommended to us this year by the remarkable circumstance, that Good Friday falls on the same day with the Feast of the Annunciation. The day of our remembering the Lord's Death is the same with that, on which the Angel came to declare His wonderful Incarnation. The moment in which He emptied Himself of His glory, and took on Him the form of a servant; and the other moment, in which He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross; the first beginning and the final consummation of His Sacrifice; these two awful moments are in this year's Calendar gathered together in one. The Blessed Virgin seems in a remarkable way to be brought and set by the Cross: and the Church's collect for the Feast of her Annunciation seems to come home to our minds with more than its usual meaning. For in that collect we pray that all of us, "as we have known the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ by the message of an Angel, so by His Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of His Resurrection;" which words seem clearly to connect the Annunciation with the Crucifixion, and to set before us in some sort the Mother of our Lord,

the highly-favoured and deeply afflicted one, as our pattern how to wait on Christ from the beginning to the end, with the Cross always in view.

Let us then try to fix our minds for a short time, with the best of our weak adoration, on this particular point of our Lord's Passion, that He had His blessed Mother in sight, and tasted to the full that deep and piercing affliction, which dutiful hearts feel, when those dear to them are suffering, especially if that suffering be on their account.

We see at once that He graciously teaches us hereby, to turn towards the Cross for a remedy, as in all other sorrows, so in every kind of family distress; in the sickness, death, and suffering of kinsmen or near friends, and in our own sufferings, so far as they affect our friends. No burthen of that kind so heavy, but a man may find strength to bear it, if he will place himself by the Blessed Virgin under the Cross, and look up and hear the gracious words there spoken to her.

He Who recommended to one another's care His Mother and His most favoured disciple, in some of His last words, when the pains of death had begun; it cannot be that He should be ignorant of any part of what His servants feel, when His providence calls them to separate one from another. He knows it all, for He put it into our minds. He created us at first with that tender affection, which all bear to parents and children, brethren and sisters; and His Holy Spirit is ever pouring more and more charity into our hearts, if we will but dutifully open them to Him.

We are sure, therefore, that the gracious Son of

man feels for and with us His poor creatures, both in our affliction on losing friends or seeing them suffer, and in the comfort we take in their presence, when we are afflicted. He had before wept at Lazarus' death; He had had compassion on the widowed mother at Nain; and now He looks down from His Cross, in the midst of His pangs, and is afflicted in the affliction of His Mother.

And because, as it seems, she had no near kinsman at hand, and Joseph her husband was probably now dead, He points out one who should do a son's part by her, saying to her, "Behold thy son," and to him, "Behold thy Mother:" by which He teaches us, that in all our bereavements, the comfort we take in one another's presence and care comes in truth from no other but Him. It is He Who provides so wonderfully, as we often see, for those who would otherwise seem to be left helpless: "^aHe is a Father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widows;" causing continually some one to be at hand, who can more or less take the place of such as are removed by His chastisements: He will open fountains in the wilderness, "^band streams in the desert." If they look to Him in earnest, they will find cause to say with Hagar, "Thou, God, seest me."

And whereas men's earnest affection teaches them to feel, that after all, nothing can entirely make up for the loss of the person they are mourning for; "such an one," they say, "may wait on us as well, may do as much for us, but he never can be the same to us as he whom we have lost, because he never can be the very same person:" our Blessed

^a Ps. lxxviii. 5.

^b Isa. xxxv. 6.

Lord, in His extreme mercy, has provided for this want also, instructing us, that by virtue of our common mysterious union with Him, we are not entirely separated from those who seem to be most entirely gone from us. They are not departed, though they have departed; we are not left altogether without them, so long as both they and we are one with Him Who never can leave us nor forsake us.

Consider what a difference this would make, what a light it would throw on the death-beds of Christian people, if both the dying and their friends had really such a faith as this, and had lived such lives as not to forfeit the blessing of it: if we felt that, although persons very dear to us are taken out of sight, they are not taken away from us; that, in Holy Communion especially, when the Priest makes mention of all who have "departed this life in God's faith and fear," they are invisibly with us, part of the "company of Heaven."

Again: it seems often bitterly to heighten the sorrows of those who are dying, when they think of leaving those nearest and dearest to them; they are oppressed with the thought, Who now will care for them and look after them? But here, in our Lord's Passion, such persons have the tenderest assurance, that He will more than make up their loss to those left behind, if not unworthy: nay, that by virtue of their mystical union with Him, the departed will themselves be present with the survivors, more entirely and intimately present with them than in their lifetime.

And, indeed, the thought of Christ being with those who are left behind, in that very near and

wonderful sense in which He is with worthy communicants: this thought, really received and permitted to sink into the mind, would seem enough to overpower and swallow up all fear and care about our being separated from them. God seems to say to the mourner, in words like those of His Prophet^c, I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be dejected on account of a man that was mortal, and of the son of man who was made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?

Nay, even in that very sad case, when the departing parent or friend has reason to fear, that those for whom he is anxious are going on in such a way as to forfeit the blessed union with Christ, on which all hope and consolation depend: even then the circumstances of this moment may cause a hope which could hardly be felt otherwise. He Who felt so deeply for His Mother, who knows how He may be touched with the tears and anguish of a dying Christian, pleading with Him for those who seem now to be lost sheep, but whom God, with Whom all things are possible, may yet restore, if earnestly and constantly called upon? As we read of the mother of a great saint, herself a great saint too, that when in the early part of her son's life she bewailed his fall bitterly, and seemed almost to despond concerning him, a holy Bishop told her not to despond; "^dGo thy ways, and God bless thee, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish." Thus the Cross is man's hope and remedy, even in that seemingly hopeless

^c Isa. li. 12, 13.

^d S. Aug. Conf. iii. ult. p. 44. Oxf. Tr.

case, of one on whom His power has been tried, and who is apparently not the better for it.

All this, the thought of our dying Lord with His Mother was meant to be to all Christians : and all this it is to be to those among Christian mourners, who have in some sort duly prepared themselves for it; but not, if people have been bred up from the beginning in ease and comfort and never taught seriously to deny themselves; not, if they have been always used to say, “^e To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.” Our Lord did not so prepare His blessed Mother for the immense grief and unspeakable disturbance of His Passion. He had been long and effectually, though not always directly, giving her to understand what she had to expect. Very soon after His birth, the prophet, the aged Simeon, after speaking of her Son’s glory, adds to herself this most charitable caution : “^f This Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against : yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also.” For this, we may conjecture, our Lord had spoken to her, at one time, about His hour coming; at another time, about His being in His Father’s house, and therefore away for a time from her : at another time, about His being a brother and a child, not to her and His blood-relations only, but to all men whatever, who will do the Will of God.

All these sayings, it would appear, would prepare the Virgin by degrees for the awful Cross : and in like manner Christians have plenty of warnings to look on to “^g the days of darkness, for they shall be

^e Isa. lvi. 12.

^f S. Luke ii. 34, 35.

^g Eccles. xi. 8.

many." Every day of the sacred time of Lent, of the Holy Week especially, is a notice, repeated every year of our lives, that we must prepare to take up the Cross, to bear our share of our Blessed Lord's afflictions; for without doing so it is in vain to think of entering into His glory. They who take that notice, and prepare themselves accordingly, humbling and denying their own souls and bodies, they will be provided and strengthened against temptation and tribulation, when they come, in a manner which now they little dream of: as the Virgin Mother, no doubt, felt herself, she knew not how, strengthened to endure what awaited her under the Cross, by the many tokens, silent or express, which her Holy Son had been always giving her, of a deep tide of affliction rolling on. They will lie the more easily on their own sick bed, and will watch the more calmly and effectually by the sick beds of those who are dear to them.

Were it only on this ground, one might see the use of that self-denial, which the Church orders, and which so many neglect and scorn. It would prepare us to be patient ourselves and charitable to others, as a nurse or a physician is prepared by the like self-denials. It would introduce us in good time to the house of mourning; so that when we are called in our turn to dwell there, it might not seem so strange and confounding to us, but we might have the more presence of mind, to do all our duty, and give God all the glory.

It is also to be considered, that by such lowly and self-denying habits we put ourselves more nearly into the Blessed Virgin's place, in respect of the nearer

knowledge of Christ's dignity and glory, which she had, compared with the other witnesses of His Death. She, among them all, knew most of His Divine Nature: the secret of His unspeakable Birth was in a peculiar sense hers; the Angelic messages had been sent, and the prophetic words addressed to her: as therefore her grief was more than others, so was her preparation to bear it: and we too, in our measure, might be prepared as she was, if we would practise in all things humility and subduing the flesh. For to the humble and self-denying God reveals His high mysteries: other people *say* the words of the Creed, but they *feel* them: the Almighty Jesus, their crucified Lord, makes Himself in an especial manner present to such: so that, when they are to bear a somewhat heavier portion of His Cross, they can bear it the better, being endowed with some of His strength.

But here comes in a serious consideration; that, as far as knowledge goes, although the Blessed Virgin had so much the advantage of the rest who were by the Cross, yet we are not sure that she had the advantage of us. The least in the kingdom of heaven, as he is greater than the old Prophets, or S. John the Baptist, so he knows, by the Church's Creed, that He Who died upon the Cross is God made Man, as certainly as the Blessed Virgin knew it her very self. When therefore affliction comes upon us, we ought to be found ready to bear it as she did. Whatever be its form, whether sickness and pain of our own, or the sickness of dear friends, and the pain of parting with them, or ill-usage, or want, and doubt about our maintenance; to us it should always take the form

of the Cross: we should feel it as placing us there, by the side of Christ's holy Mother; and the same thoughts which she had to support her, we ought to be furnished with.

Sad indeed and shameful it is to think, how far otherwise we are too commonly minded. We may put this matter to present proof, by asking ourselves how it is, that, in this very day and hour, we feel concerning our Lord's Sufferings (to say the least) so very little of what a Christian would wish to feel. When we have answered that question thoughtfully, we shall know what danger we are in, and on what side, of casting away the benefit of our own cross, whensoever it shall please God of His gracious goodness to lay it upon us.

For instance, it is matter of miserable experience, how impurity of heart deadens all feeling of Christ's Presence, how it unfits people for prayer, and makes them dull and indifferent even in these most holy times: and it is unhappily no less certain, that the awful lessons of sickness and death, of sorrow and pain, are lost upon the soul, possessed with that unclean spirit; there may be natural tears, there is often softness of feeling, there is sometimes patient kindness in waiting on the afflicted: but the great, the crowning, what one may almost call the Sacramental, blessing, offered by God's grace to worthy attendance on such scenes, I mean their conforming us more and more, and bringing us nearer, to the Cross of our Lord, this surely is forfeited by unclean thoughts and habits. Such an unhappy sinner, without deep and earnest repentance, is not only unfit to imagine himself standing with the Holy Mary, under

the Cross of our Lord, but he is unfit to stand by the death-bed of any whom he loved. There is great fear that the Cross laid upon him will but harden his heart, and make his case worse. What a sin then is impurity of heart, which goes so near to forfeit that last and best chance of amendment, God's afflictions entering in and humbling our souls!

And it is not much, if at all, better, if a man's sin be intemperance or covetousness, or love of ease and pleasure, or any thing else entirely selfish. However near we have been brought to Christ, by Holy Baptism first, and religious education afterwards, these evil habits will before long entirely separate us from Him; for they are in fact so many constant endeavours to shake His Cross off from our shoulders.

Let us be aware of this danger: let us remember that while the Blessed Mary, she who was all purity and humbleness, drew near to her suffering Son and was sustained by Him, there was among those who knew most of His glory, and had been allowed to draw nearest to Him, one who dared not approach His Cross at all, Judas Iscariot; who, when he heard of the Passion, was shocked indeed, but despaired instead of amending. We have been admitted to his first privileges, and more: let us dread his end, and worse.

And as we are sure that the Blessed Virgin never could forget the moment when her Son, Who is her God, spake to her in His agony; so let us strive and pray to remember His Cross in all times and circumstances. If our lot be peaceful and our home happy, let us think with ourselves, "This, with all other blessings, was purchased for me by the wounds and

death of our Lord: it is dearly bought, let me at least not abuse it." If, on the other hand, He have begun to lay His Cross upon us, let us strive daily to grow in purity of heart, and to disengage ourselves from all that is proud and worldly and selfish: considering, what pity it were, that even the chastisements of God, our last hope, should be thrown away upon us: that the very shadow of the Cross, under which we are brought, should do us no good.

SERMON XIX.

THE HOLY WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE.

EASTER EVE.

S. LUKE xxiii. 55, 56.

“The women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His Body was laid: and they returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath-day, according to the commandment.”

THE history of our Lord's Death and Passion may be called, in a certain sense, the religious history of the whole world. It might, perhaps, be true to say, that all the persons gathered round His Cross, whether as friends or as enemies, do, as it were, stand for so many sorts of people and their several ways of behaving to Him, not in those times only, but in our times and in all times. There were Jews, to represent the open enemies of Christ and His Gospel; Pilate, to be a sample of those (not a few), who, being convinced in their hearts that the Christian way is the only right way, yet deliberately give it up for fear of doing themselves harm in this world; Judas, a type of those most miserable ones, who, being specially entrusted by Jesus Christ, fall into such sins as to give the devil an opportunity of

entering into them, and tempting them to betray their trust; the Roman soldiers, of unthinking persons, who do as the world bids them, right or wrong, though it be never so much against their Saviour. On the other hand, by God's great mercy, there were also a few faithful and pious servants of our Lord: there was S. John the beloved disciple, and the blessed Virgin Mother, emblems of the highest degree of faith and love; there was the penitent thief, who died confessing Him; there was S. Peter, who was even then weeping, probably at a distance, as counting himself unworthy to draw near the Cross of Him Whom he had so lately denied; there was the centurion, owning, like a thoughtful heathen on the way to Christian belief, "Truly this man was the Son of God;" there were Joseph and Nicodemus, rich men both, and both disciples of Christ, but in secret for fear of the Jews; there were, lastly, the pious women, of whom the text makes mention; on whose example, and the blessing they received, I wish to say something to-day.

It is not for nothing, depend upon it, that the history and names of those women are so mixed up with the accounts of our Lord's Burial and Resurrection. What is said of them was, no doubt, meant as an encouragement to all quiet and simple persons, who should follow them in doing good and waiting on their Saviour. They are patterns of two things, which God especially delights to honour: humble, unpretending, yet earnest devotion, and quiet exercise of the duties of their calling, according to their condition and station in the world.

They were patterns of devotion; for they followed

Christ from Galilee, which must have been great self-denial. It was much for men, such as the Apostles, to forsake home and parents, kinsfolk and friends, for the sake of keeping close to our Lord: for women to do so, was a still greater thing, in proportion to the feebleness of their nature. Again, they ministered to Him of their substance; Mary Magdalene especially, and Joanna, who were wealthy persons. S. Luke had told us long before^a, that such was their practice towards our Lord. They acknowledged in that way His inestimable mercy in healing them of infirmities, or casting out evil spirits. Therefore their continuing near Him, even in His death, was no sudden impulse of natural pity or any other strong feeling. It was just persevering in a course of duty, which they had entered on long before. Christ, it seems, had accepted their services, offered in grateful acknowledgment of His mercy, although He had refused to permit the person, out of whom a legion of devils had gone, to stay with Him, when he earnestly besought leave to do so. These women, more highly favoured, were allowed to wait still on our Saviour; and so waiting, they grew in faith, so as not to shrink from attending even on His very Cross. Neither fear of the Jews, nor any kind of shrinking, so natural to weak frames when death is near, more especially death in torment; neither, I say, of these feelings kept them back or drove them away from their Lord's departing moments. While indifferent people "smote their breasts," and returned, "^b His acquaintance, and the women that followed from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things."

^a S. Luke viii. 3.

^b Ib. xxiii. 49.

It was no more than might be expected, that the same affectionate temper should cause them to be deeply and religiously anxious for His blessed Body after His death. When Joseph and Nicodemus came, and took Him down from the Cross, (where it is noted as an instance of boldness in Joseph^c, that he feared not to go in unto Pilate with such a request), the women followed after, without any doubt or scruple; they seem to have had no thought of fearing the Jews. Neither would they consent to leave to Nicodemus and Joseph the whole trouble and expense of our Saviour's funeral; though *they* both could well afford it, and were ready to do much; for the one had already bought one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, the other had given up his own new tomb for the purpose. Nevertheless, the holy women would by no means endure to be bereaved of their part in the blessed and pious work; they noted carefully how and where the Body was laid, with a view to yet one more task of love, the last, as they imagined, which they could undertake for Christ. They made haste and prepared spices and ointments, in order to do Him such further honour as they could, as soon as ever the Sabbath should be past.

But here comes in that other point, in which, as I said, the Holy Spirit appears to hold them out as patterns to us. With all their earnest and courageous love, they still preserved the quietness and simplicity of the character, which properly belongs to women. We do not read of their breaking out into any kind of wailing or lamentation; they waited, it seems, by the Cross, in resignation, noticing every thing, with

^c S. Mark xv. 43.

that presence of mind, which God often gives to His faithful servants, for their own and others' good, even in times of deepest distress. Having seen the Blessed Body in the grave, they do not stay by it, to mourn and lament, but they lose no time in buying and preparing spices; recollecting (which is another instance of their thoughtfulness), that the Sabbath was near at hand, and then they could not have bought the spices.

How it was so near at hand, you may easily perceive, if you bear in mind that the Jews counted their days to begin from six in the evening of the day before. For instance, when it was now six on Friday afternoon, they would reckon Saturday, or the Sabbath, as actually begun. Now, it was three in the afternoon before our Lord gave up the Ghost, and we find that Joseph was much hurried to finish the laying of the Body in the grave before the Sabbath should begin; therefore it must have been *very* near six when the women set about preparing the spices: and having so done, says S. Luke, "they rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment."

The use I would make of this is, to observe that the holy women did not suffer their earnest zeal and affection for the honour of their Master to prevent their keeping, as far as was possible, the outward and ceremonial commandments of God also; they did not permit their deep feeling, even on such an occasion as this, to carry them away, as sometimes is the case, and cause them unnecessarily to leave undone any ordinary and regular duties. And this I take to be a great instance of that kind of self-denial, which is peculiarly to be practised by women: namely, con-

straining themselves, in the midst of deep care and affliction, to remember even lesser duties at proper times ; much more such duties as the observance of God's day of rest. A thing to be much considered by those, who allow themselves too easily to be excused for slighting our day of rest, the Lord's Day. And it is slighted, remember, not only by unnecessary work, but as much or more by neglect of public worship ; by refusing to acknowledge God in the assembling of ourselves together.

Observe this, you who so quietly miss the Prayers and Communion of the Church, on every slight excuse of household business or other inconvenience ; you who will not rise a little earlier, or otherwise put yourselves out of the way, in order to get things forward, that you may present yourselves the more regularly before your Saviour, to beg His blessing and receive His grace. Observe, the holy women, who were likeliest to know what would please our Saviour, having been waiting on Him so many months ; they would not, if they could possibly help it, permit even their attendance on His Sacred Body, the highest of all labours of love ; they would not even permit it to cause them to break the rest of their Sabbath. They made haste ; they put themselves out of the way, to get the spices and ointments prepared before Friday was over, that they might leave the whole Saturday free for holy rest.

But the moment that rest was over, very early in the morning of the first day of the week, their affectionate reverence for our Lord had made them active again. They came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. They came as soon as ever they could,

“bringing the spices which they had prepared; and certain others with them,” moved, perhaps, by their good example, and in reward for their following it, now to be made partakers of their blessing.

They brought the spices which they had prepared, although they were by no means certain that their doing so would be of any use; for, on the way to the tomb, we find them speaking, with the same thoughtful anxiety as before, about the great stone, which Joseph in their sight had rolled to the door of the sepulchre. As they went, they said, “^d Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?” . . . “for it was very great.” This, with many other circumstances, shews that they had not the least notion of the wonders which God had prepared, to reward their faith withal, when they came to the tomb.

Accordingly, the sight of the angel abashed them; “^e they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth.” So utterly unprepared were they for the joyful message, that some of them, when told “He is risen,” were, it seems, as much troubled with fear and amazement at the sudden interference of the Almighty, as they were comforted at the assurance of the Resurrection of Christ. “^f They went out quickly and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.” They did not, so to speak, come to themselves, until they actually met our Lord, and heard from Him, “^g All hail,” and were graciously permitted to hold Him by the Feet and worship Him.

^d S. Mark xvi. 3, 4.

^e S. Luke xxiv. 5.

^f S. Mark xvi. 8.

^g S. Matt. xxviii. 9.

I do not deny but there might in all this be a deep mysterious meaning, a lesson for us all, as to our Lord's usual way of making Himself known to His servants. As long as He is known only by the hearing of the ear, by the message of His angels, or of men doing the angels' office, so long the doctrine concerning Him is full of confusion and amazement. Men may not indeed disbelieve it, but it startles and perplexes them; it takes no settled shape in their minds, nor any fixed hold of their hearts. For those blessed ends, it must be communicated to them by Christ Himself. He must enter in and dwell in their hearts, by His Spirit, and give them in some way His Blessed Body to touch.

It may be that something like this is shadowed out in the Gospel history of the women's coming to the sepulchre: but at any rate we are sure from that history that they had no notion at all of what would happen: it came upon them by surprise. They thought of nothing but doing their daily duties, and of shewing their love to Christ dead and buried, in the best way that circumstances allowed; and behold, God made them first of the chosen witnesses, to whom He shewed Christ alive; their faith was the first-fruits of the faith of the whole Church; it came even before that of the Apostles themselves.

It is not hard, and to many it ought to be most consoling, to perceive what the Holy Ghost intended we should learn by this gracious example. Plainly the whole history is full of encouragement for those virtues and graces in particular, which the women of Christ's flock are most continually called on to practise. God's providence has cast on the female sex

a number of homely and minute duties, which many are apt, too hastily, to plead as an apology for their more or less neglect of religion. Here you have a plain instance, how those duties themselves may be turned into part of religion. Industry, for example, in household work of any kind, may be quickened by the thought of getting that work over some minutes sooner than usual, so as to be able to draw near God once the oftener in His Church, or at least to approach Him seriously in private prayer. Charity in thoughtful waiting on men's souls and bodies, even in the least matters, (which seems also to be a great part of the province of females,) may be greatly animated by the recollection that Christ reckons such things as done to Him. Works of mercy, even the meanest, performed or intended to any of His living members, are as the sweet odours, which the holy women brought on the first Easter morning, to anoint the lifeless members of His natural Body. They may not perhaps be wanted for the particular purpose; the cost and price of them may in some cases seem thrown away for the time; but the willing mind which brings them will not lose its reward: it thought to do a little good, to satisfy a kind feeling on earth, and God will find a recompense for it in heaven, as much above what it now imagines, as Mary Madgalene's seeing our Lord that morning was above what she had promised to herself, the consolation of waiting on His dead Body.

Let me, in conclusion, once more beg you to observe that this great blessing was quite independent of an exact understanding of the doctrines of religion, or of any thing answering to what we call scholarship,

the want of which is so often pleaded as a good reason for being more or less irreligious. The women at the sepulchre were probably in that state of mind, which, when it is found, now causes the persons who are in it to be accounted by many, poor ignorant women, however full of good meaning. Let not such then, whether men or women, be discouraged: let them be up early and late take rest, ever busy in good works, waiting on Christ's members, and making time to wait on Himself in His Church. Let us all, in such little matters as we can, deny ourselves for His sake: and we shall be sure in time to find that virtue, which comes out of Him to all those who touch but the hem of His garment.

SERMON XX.

CHRISTIAN REVERENCE FOR THE DEAD.

EASTER EVE.

S. LUKE xxiii. 55.

“And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His Body was laid.”

NOT without particular meaning, we may be sure, did the Holy Spirit of God cause this particular, the presence of certain holy and devout women, to be put down in all the four Gospels, when they come to give an account of the miracles of this time, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many other circumstances are told, some by one of the Evangelists, some by another : but all four agree in telling us, that certain acquaintance and relations of our Lord, who had followed Him from Galilee, Mary the wife of Cleophas, the sister of the Blessed Virgin, Mary Magdalene, and others, were standing by the Cross, and afterwards beheld where His Body was laid : and that the same women were also the first, both to resort to His Sepulchre and find it empty, and to meet with Him after He was risen. Now one great purpose of this being so ordered, and set down so exactly, was to take away all doubt of

the reality of Christ's Resurrection. The very same persons who saw Him dead and buried, saw Him also risen again. They came to the grave expecting to find Him dead, to do honour to His Blessed Body; and even when they did see Him, they either took Him for another person, or fancied they saw a spirit; therefore in their testimony to His being risen they could not possibly be deceived; and one may easily see, that when unbelievers, Jews, and heretics, were to be convinced, this must have been a very material consideration.

But there is another way of looking at this subject, and one to us far more important and interesting. We may set ourselves to reflect on the high privilege, which these holy women enjoyed, alone as far as we see, of being witnesses of our Lord's Burial as well as of His Death and Resurrection. I say, alone; for it does not appear that S. John, the only one of the Apostles who stood by His Cross, was by, when He was laid in the grave; nor yet on the other hand that Joseph and Nicodemus, who with the women took Him down and buried Him, were in sight when He gave up the Ghost. But the women, we are expressly told, were witnesses of both. Besides seeing Him after He had risen from the dead, they were indulged with being by and seeing how His Body was laid. It is likely they assisted in wrapping Him in linen clothes with the spices; even as nature herself seems to direct, that women should assist in performing those last sacred charities for the dead.

Now it seems very well worth observing, that this near approach to the holy dead is set down as a great privilege, not in this place only, but generally in the

Old Testament. See how minutely, all through the book of Genesis, the burials of the Patriarchs are recorded ; the places exactly described, and the persons named, who chiefly assisted at the funeral. Thus when Sarah died, the Holy Spirit has set down at large the whole course of Abraham's bargain, which he made with some of the people of the land, to buy a field with a certain cave in it, for a possession of a burying-place. When Abraham himself gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people, his sons Isaac and Ishmael, we read, buried him in that cave. Afterwards, Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days : and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him. Jacob's burial was with all care by his twelve sons, in the same cave of Machpelah, whither he was carried on purpose out of Egypt with great pomp. Joseph, before he died, gave commandment that his bones should be carried up out of Egypt, and the book of Exodus most carefully relates how this was attended to, at their going out, two or three generations after, and the book of Joshua tells us how they were buried in Shechem. Also, concerning Moses (to mention no more in particular) we find it set down as a special dispensation of Providence (for the prevention of idolatry, as is supposed) that " ^a no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." Now it was not without reason, surely, that the place and mode of their burial is so particularly recorded in so many instances. It unquestionably shews that the Almighty does not disapprove of that feeling, which

^a Deut. xxxiv. 6.

is nearly common to all men, to be anxious about their friends' "burial," and to count it a privilege, when they dwell near, or when they only occasionally visit, the grave of any one, whom they believe to be very holy.

Neither may it be imagined, that this was only a feeling suited to the old times, before our Saviour came, when people, having far less distinct notions of the Resurrection, may be supposed to have been more anxious about what little they could do to secure a kind of fancy, or shadow, of a lost friend continuing among them. The fact was not so; for we find the same feeling acknowledged with approbation in the New Testament too, not only in the case of S. John the Baptist before our Lord's death, but also in the case of the first Martyr S. Stephen afterwards. For as of the Baptist the Gospel has recorded, his disciples "^bcame and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb," so of S. Stephen we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that "^cdevout men carried" him "to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." Which words are inserted in the history of the first persecution, in a way to make one believe that the Church accounted it a great consolation at the time, that although the blessed Martyr was so rudely and cruelly stoned, yet his remains were not cast away, but by some special Providence were preserved in the Church's care, and buried as a Christian would desire, with brotherly lamentation. The Sacred Writer of the Acts, that is, God's Holy Spirit, by His way of mentioning S. Stephen's burial, implies, both that Christians thought thus of it at the time, and

^b S. Mark vi. 29.

^c Acts viii. 2.

that He Himself approved the thought, and would have men think it a privilege to wait upon a martyr's funeral, and honour him in his end; and of course think much of the spot where he is laid. And undoubtedly, the whole Church, with a wonderful consent, has kept up that feeling ever since. At all times, and in all countries Catholic Christians have delighted to wait on holy men, if they might, to their graves: to visit their places of rest, and shew them honour. The ancient histories of the Church greatly abound with relations of very wonderful miracles, wrought at various tombs upon the Church's prayer, and there can be very little doubt that such things did take place occasionally, God in this way setting His seal to the great doctrine of the Communion of Saints: teaching us that the departed live to Him more truly and perfectly perhaps than they had lived on earth, and that we do well to honour their memory, and hope for a blessed re-union with them.

But whether or no we may venture to think much of these miracles of the ancient Church, the tone and meaning of Holy Scripture, in the places which have been mentioned, remain exactly the same. Holy Scripture encourages the simple and affectionate to go on delighting themselves with whatever reverence they can dutifully and soberly pay to the remains of their deceased friends, or to the burial-places and memorials of holy men of old. Holy Scripture, in effect therefore, condemns the proud and disrespectful tone, which some, especially in these days, adopt, when they say, "they care not where they are buried, and they see no sense in wasting honours (as they imagine) on those who can know nothing of it."

Scripture, I say, though not in words, yet really, condemns this way of thinking, and warns us against measuring our duty and wisdom in this or any other instance by what we think we see to be useful.

But indeed, it is not hard to see that such respect for the dead and their graves, and most especially for the Holy Sepulchre of Him Who was dead and is alive, is very closely connected with a right faith on some very great and high points. If we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man, that the Holy Body which He took of S. Mary is joined to His Godhead, never again to be divided: then the Place where that Body lay must be a Holy Temple, where God would be especially worshipped. You believe that our bodies, and the bodies of all the saints, shall rise again; how can you avoid having a peculiar reverence for them? Can you help looking at, or thinking of them with awe? Does it not make your heart tremble, when you take leave of a friend's body which is just laid in the grave, and consider with yourself, "When I see him again, the sentence passed on both will be unchangeable and eternal?" Again, we believe in the Holy Catholic Church; i. e., in our Lord's being spiritually present in every one of His true and living branches; present in the soul and body of each believer, who has not yet forfeited his baptismal grace: and therefore we feel that to be disrespectful to the dead, is really and truly to be disrespectful to God. And as we account it great impiety to deal rudely even in thought with the Holy Sacrament of the Supper of the Lord, because He is there present in some mysterious manner: so let us learn to behave seriously

and reverently to the Christian dead, to their graves, and all about them, as knowing that they too have been made the Temples of the Holy Ghost, and that if they died in that grace, death could not separate, no not their lifeless bodies, from their Lord. And this I say, not that there is much fear of Christians neglecting their duty to their own friends and kindred, in this respect: but in respect of strangers, or graves that they chance to pass by, there may be. One does not always see funerals attended, or Churchyards, graves and tombs honoured with such reverence, as becomes those who carry about with them the remembrance of Christ's Passion and Burial. And even, as to the dead whom we do regard and honour, it is rather on account of some human feeling, such as the heathen might experience as well, than with due remembrance of our Christian brotherhood with them, and of Christ in them, the hope of their glory. Indeed it is a more serious thing than most of us think, to assist in waiting on a dead body, or at a funeral. As only a very few of our Saviour's friends were allowed the privilege of seeing where His Body was laid, or of helping to wrap It in the fine linen clothes with the spices; so it is not every one of us that is duly prepared for this sacred charity, or may expect to set about it with the blessing of God.

Who are so prepared, we may partly understand by observing the sort of persons who were so highly favoured at the time of our Lord's Burial. S. Mary Magdalene, for example, is particularly mentioned, who, having had a great deliverance from our Lord, for He had cast seven devils out of her, thought

she never could do enough to testify her deep love and thankfulness towards Him: who had been for months, perhaps years, ministering to Him of her substance, and who was afterwards the very first, on Easter morning, to come to His grave. Another was S. Joseph of Arimathea, who although he had feared the Jews, and therefore had not openly professed himself our Lord's disciple, yet now, on our Lord's Passion, got over his fear so far, that while His regular disciples, as it seems, were afraid, he went in boldly unto Pilate, and begged the Body of Jesus: Another was Nicodemus, who also seems to have been in a great measure cured of his former fears, which had caused him to come to Jesus, only by night; but now he openly joined with Joseph in burying our Lord with all adoring reverence, not minding what His enemies might do unto them. And they shewed also Christian courage in another respect, that they did not grudge ministering to Christ, dead as living, of their substance: they did not grudge the very best which they had, and which the shortness of the time allowed, by way of shewing their love and reverence for their most merciful and adorable Saviour: the more, as the wicked world had been more cruel and insolent towards Him.

We see then plainly enough, what the temper is, and preparation of heart which fits people to keep Easter Eve rightly, to watch by their Saviour's Grave, or by the graves of any of His members. It is patient, courageous Love: Love which waits not always to ask, and be told the *use* of whatever is to be done for our Lord: Love which casts out the fear of man; Love, which has so deep a sense of the great things

which He has done for us, that it rejoices in every sacrifice, little or great, which helps it to spend and be spent for Jesus Christ, and for His sacred Body, the Church of His little ones, left here in its care. - Of our charity let us pray for one another, that Christ would give us, however late and unworthy, some portion of this blessed Love; that we may watch quietly by Him in His Grave, and in faith rise with Him on Easter Morning.

SERMON XXI.

CHRIST'S VOICE FROM HIS GRAVE.

EASTER EVE.

S. MATT. xi. 28.

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

THE Saviour and Guardian of our souls invited us yesterday to come to His Cross and obtain life: to-day He invites us to His Grave to obtain rest. For He, in His Burial, as in His Life and Death, vouchsafed mercifully to tread in the way of His creatures: the way which His Wisdom and Mercy had in the beginning appointed for man. As He condescended day by day to be bodily weary and to require rest and sleep, as He, no less than an ordinary man, was exhausted by long journeys, by continual fasting, by extraordinary efforts of mind or body: so it pleased Him, with all the children of Adam, to lay Himself to rest awhile in the grave between His earthly and His heavenly Life. He had appointed from the beginning, that our way should be from trial through rest to glory: and accordingly He passed from the Cross through the grave to His place on the Right Hand of the Father.

Of this heavenly rest, the quiet rest of sleep in this

world is a kind of natural token or sacrament. As often as we lie down in sleep and take our rest, trusting to Him Who only "maketh" us "dwell in safety:" as often as we lay ourselves down to slumber and rise up again, we have a sort of sign and remembrancer from God our Creator and Father, of the rest which God our Redeemer has purchased for us.

Another token, distinctly set forth in Holy Scripture, is the Rest of the Sabbath or seventh day: appointed from the beginning for the people of God. All Saturdays, from the Creation to the Crucifixion of our Lord, were but types and shadows of that great Saturday in which He lay silently resting out of men's sight, after completing His awful Sacrifice, finishing the work which His Father had given Him to do. In His early Childhood, He had slept in His Mother's arms, so gathering strength, that He might be ready for that work: and now it is over He sleeps yet more quietly, under the special Guardianship of His heavenly Father, and makes Himself ready for His eternal and glorious Kingdom. These are the two most perfect pictures of tranquillity and peace under God's own care, which the world has ever seen or can see; the Son of God an Infant, His Virgin Mother watching His slumbers: and the Son of God a corpse, left alone in the tomb, which Joseph had piously prepared.

From this most quiet of all shelters we seem now to hear Him cry out with all gentleness, yet so as be heard by every heart that will listen, in every land and in every generation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for

I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour,” all that are over-tired and weary, all that are bowed down with natural weakness and infirmity. Come into this still and darkened chamber, and contemplate fully the Holy One, Who lies there before you. You are oppressed with the miserable load of sin, sin original and sin actual. Sin original, the bad inclination which you inherit from fallen Adam, hangs about you like a subtle disease, weakening you for all your work. Wait here and rest awhile: it is good for you to look steadily on this wounded and lifeless Body, free altogether from any such disorder, yet lying on purpose in this low condition, that you might be delivered from the same. Observe it well; count all its Wounds; tell if you can, the drops of Blood which it has lost: adore and admire this great and pure Sacrifice, and doubt not, but earnestly believe, that the nature, which now makes you go so stooping and feeble, may and will be cured in time by the touch and communion of that pure Body. You read in the Old Testament of a dead body buried by providential accident in the grave of the Prophet Elisha: and how, on touching the Prophet's bones, the dead man “^arevived and stood up on his feet.” That miracle was but a faint shadow of that, which is even now to happen in this Grave. Thy whole nature, “dead in trespasses and sins,” is now to be revived, and walk upright, at the touch of the Body of Jesus Christ.

Again, “Come unto Me,” says our buried Lord; “come here to Me into the quiet grave; be buried

^a 2 Kgs. xiii. 21.

with Me by continual mortifying of your corrupt affections; and I will give you rest; from that burden also, which oppresses you even more than your fallen nature; from the evil habits, which you have miserably brought on yourself." Here you may put off your carnal sins. Do you not see, what Wounds they have made in this pure and heavenly Body, willingly submitting itself to what they deserved? Here you may put off your ambition and love of worldly consequence. How should it come in here, where the Prince of the kings of the earth has voluntarily laid Himself low, even to the dust? Here you may part for ever with your pride, and inward good opinion of yourself, now that you see to what a condition your unworthiness has brought this meek and innocent Lamb, your best Friend, and only Saviour. Come and be rid, once for all, of every one of these heavy burthens: you must leave them all at the door of the sepulchre; they cannot enter in there: but see to it, that when you depart, when your Easter meditations are over, you take not up your sins again, and return with them into the world. Strive, pray, prevail upon Him to take them from you once and for ever. Beseech Him, that when He rises tomorrow, He would take and raise you with Him; would give you such a heavenly mind, such a true love for the great and eternal things, as may lift you fairly beyond the reach of the Evil one, so that he may have no chance to bind again his cruel and heavy yoke upon you.

And, be sure, that if you make your Saviour's grave a refuge from sin and evil thoughts, it will prove to you a refuge in sorrow and anxiety also. In

this sense again He invites you to come here, weary as you are and heavy laden with many troubles both of mind and body, in your own person, or in those dear to you; troubles justly due to your many sins and negligences. "Come unto Me," He seems to say, all ye bereaved and orphaned ones: all ye that travail and are heavy laden with grief for some one who has been taken from you, and whose departure has seemed to leave you alone in the world. Come here and meet the regretted one in this My grave: I will give you rest and refreshment; the rest and refreshment of humble hope, that your beloved is not far off, and that you will not be long separated from him. And when with the eye of devout meditation, you see how sweetly your Lord rests in His grave, and remember that where He is, there also His faithful servants are to be, you will no more, surely, wish your friends back in this unquiet, uncertain world. It would be too much like wishing Him back from His peaceful grave again to His bitter Cross.

"Come," once more He cries out in His Silence, come to Me here in My sepulchre, all ye who labour and are heavy laden with the weight of disappointed hopes: whose ways seem to be hedged in, that you cannot get into the right and even road, cannot pursue your path in peace. Come, sit awhile by the side of this pierced and lifeless Body which was in labours and sufferings from its youth up, all for one great and holy purpose, to convert sinners, and bring the lost home to God; and here it lies rejected and mangled by those for whom it bore so much, counted as one among the rest who go down to the pit, and leaving, to the eye of man, very few to care for it, very few

believers and penitents on earth. Come and see the Most High God enduring disappointment to teach you patience: and will not you learn the lesson? Yes, even in spiritual things, in the hopes we cherish of our own improvement and that of others, it is the Will of our heavenly Father that we should endure many and sore disappointments, and that we should endure them with patience. It is a hard lesson: but which of us can say, we have not richly deserved it in many ways? And He has given us His own Son to be our Teacher, and the Holy Sepulchre to be our school. If we patiently and thankfully abide there, learning this one lesson, during the sad and anxious hours, then the bright hours, when they arrive, will be to us joy and consolation indeed. “^b Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Saturday will pass into Sunday, Easter Eve will become Easter Day; and then (remember this, I beseech you), those who stayed longest by the Cross, and came earliest to the grave, will be the first to see JESUS risen.

^b Heb. x. 37.

SERMON XXII.

THE CHRISTIAN GOOD-NIGHT.

EASTER EVE.

Ps. iv. 8.

“I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest, for it is Thou, Lord, only, Who makest me dwell in safety.”

THIS is one of those many verses in the Bible, in the Psalms especially, which must come home to every heart of man, if read with any degree of simple faith. It sets full before us the most comfortable and refreshing picture of a devout, sober, honest person, after his day's work ended, his passions kept in order, his sins repented of, and his prayers seriously said, laying himself down to his night's rest, in the full consciousness that he is neither alone nor unguarded ; that, as there has been a merciful Eye watching over him, a mighty Hand stretched out to guard him, through the dangers and temptations of the day, so it will be with him in the night also. His limbs are grown weary, but the Arm of the Lord is not so. His eyelids sink down with sleep ; the Eye of the Lord never becomes heavy. Therefore such an one, be he young or old, rich or poor, is able to compose himself to sleep without fear ; although he is more

aware than other less thoughtful persons, of the enemies that are around him, the spirits of darkness, who would fain do him harm in his sleep. The considerate Christian knows and thinks more of these than other men do; but he is not, therefore, afraid of the night, nor of darkness, because he knows and thinks more also of Him Who is stronger than all they; Who has encouraged him not to be afraid for “^a the pestilence that walketh in darkness,” any more than “for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day.”

This entire rest and tranquillity of God’s faithful servants, when they lay them down on their bed at night, is beautifully expressed in the text by the words, “I will lay me down in peace,” as they stand in the original language. “I will lay me down,” says holy David, “*all together* :” all my powers of mind and body, agreeing, as it were, one with another; not torn by violent passions, by desire on the one hand and remorse on the other; not in the condition of the natural man as described by S. Paul, “^b The good that I would I do not: but the evil that I would not that I do,” and again, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.” Not so is it with him, of whom the Psalmist here speaks; but rather he resembles the spiritual man, as described by the same S. Paul: “^c The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

^a Ps. xci. 6.

^b Rom. vii. 19, 22, 23.

^c 1 Thess. v. 23.

Another thing seems worth observing here, which indeed I have already touched on : how Catholic, that is, Universal, is the thought expressed by this verse of the Psalmist. There is no one condition or state of life which it suits, better than another ; it belongs alike to you, to me, to all. For why ? The need of taking rest in sleep is an universal law of God's providence over men here in this lower world. In respect of it there is no difference between the highest and the lowest. Therefore, as death, so sleep, may be truly called a great leveller. The greatest king and the meanest of his subjects, whatever difference there is between them at any given time of their waking moments, must alike surrender themselves up, and fall down helpless, and forget themselves in sleep, before a great many hours are over. To every one of us, one as much as another, there will then be but one chance of safety ; that is, if God should be pleased to watch over us, and be with us, when we are away from ourselves. It is one of God's ways of continually reminding us all, what frail helpless beings we are ; what an absolute nothing without Him.

But as sleep is the image of death, and as the slumber of every night, rightly understood, is to a Christian a kind of sacramental token of that last long sleep ; so these same words may well be used, and always have been understood by devout persons as most proper for a *dying* Christian also, "I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest, for it is Thou, Lord, only, Who makest me dwell in safety."

I say "of a dying *Christian*:" for such an one only has a warrant from Holy Scripture to regard death

as no more than a quiet sleep. Observe how these expressions, "fallen asleep," "sleeping in Jesus," and the like, are always used in the New Testament. They are constantly employed to denote the death, not of any persons, but of those who die in the Lord. Thus, our Saviour speaking of Lazarus, "^d Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." Thus of the holy Martyr S. Stephen; when he had prayed for his murderers, "^e he fell asleep." Thus S. Paul speaks with horror of some men's notion that there was no resurrection, because in that case it must follow that those who are "^f fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Thus, in another place he assures the Thessalonians, that "^g them also who sleep in Jesus God will bring with Him," when He comes to raise the dead.

Quiet sleep, therefore, is the image of *their* death, who die as living members of the Holy Jesus: whom the Father, therefore, acknowledging them as His children, receives at their death into the Everlasting Arms. As for others who have so lived and died, as finally to forfeit their baptismal privileges, and cut themselves off from the Body of Christ, no such promise, be sure, belongs to them; they have their part in a very different text: "^h The wicked," says the Prophet, "are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Now as all the blessings which we have or hope for, either in this world or in the next, depend on the Passion of our Lord and Saviour, and are to be re-

^d S. John xi. 11.

^e Acts vii. 60.

^f 1 Cor. xv. 18.

^g 1 Thess. iv. 14.

^h Isa. lvii. 20, 21.

ferred to it ; so this blessing of laying ourselves down in peace and taking our rest, whether in our bed or in our grave, seems to bear an especial relation to the mystery of this day, the Burial of Jesus Christ. By virtue of our heavenly and spiritual union with Him, our buried Lord, we hope for safe and quiet sleep, after the work and service of each day of our trial ; and for a slumber yet safer and quieter, when that trial is quite over ; a comfortable place in Paradise for our souls, and for our bodies a grave on which God's blessing shall rest. Our warrant for this hope is, that the Son of God died for us, bought us to be His own with His precious Blood : bought us to be His own in such sort, that we should be really joined to Him, mystically made members of His Body, and, as such, have a share, as in His Cross and Passion here, so in the heavenly and eternal good things, wherewith God crowned Him in the world out of sight. As members, inseparable members, of the Man Christ Jesus, we hope to have our bodies buried with Him ; and for our souls, our true selves, we hope that when they pass away from our bodies, they may be with Him that day in Paradise.

Except we have this hope in us, I do not see how we can well apply to ourselves the comfortable words of the Psalm. For those words are spoken by David in the person of Jesus Christ and His Church, after the manner of most of the divine Psalms. Whence it follows, that none but members of Christ and His Church, properly speaking, have any right to use those words. But *they* may ; they may truly say with their Lord, “ⁱ Thou hast set me at liberty when

ⁱ Ps. iv. 1.

I was in trouble ;” they may complain with Him of the children of this world^k, blaspheming His and their honour, following vanity, seeking after lies ; and, in like manner, as He said on the Cross, (and they seem to have been His very last words,) “¹Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit,” so they may, every night of their lives, and still more when the night of death draws on, gather and compose all their thoughts and affections into that one most exalting and soothing thought of all, that they are about to fall asleep in His arms, Who long ago, when they were little children, took them up, marked them for His own, and blessed them.

Let us dwell for a while upon this thought ; for surely it must do us good, if we really put our minds to it. How is it that in sleep, and still more in death, Christian men may humbly depend on a peculiar Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ to guard them ?

First, because He is that King, Who has promised to His people Israel, “^m He will not suffer thy foot to be moved, and He that keepeth thee will not sleep. Behold He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” Christ is the King, Who makes that promise, and we are the Israel to whom the promise is made. Whether over His whole Church, or over each member of the same who has not forfeited the blessed privilege, His word stands sure ; “ⁿ The Lord Himself is thy keeper, the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand, so that the sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night :” nothing at all shall really hurt thee. And when thou seemest to be most

^k Ps. iv. 2.

¹ S. Luke xxiii. 46.

^m Ps. cxxi. 3.

ⁿ Ib. 5, 6.

helpless, as in sleep and in death, then is the fatherly care of thy King most engaged to watch over thee, as He watched when thou wast a child, cast on Him from the womb, and on thy mother's breasts.

Again ; as in every other part of our life, in all things that we do and suffer, so in this act of laying ourselves down, either to sleep or to die, comes in the remembrance and the power of our Lord's Sacrifice. That deep sleep of His, on the Cross and in the grave, hath sanctified and blessed the sleep of all penitent Christians for all time to come, whether in their beds or in the bosom of the earth. Doubt it not, there are Angels to watch their graves, as they watched His ; so as that not one of their hallowed and purified bodies shall be missing at the last day. And here, by the way, is one reason more, for dealing more reverentially and cautiously with the tombs of the dead, and the places where they lie, than too many are apt to do.

But in respect of our Lord's Sacrifice, how it makes our sleep quiet, we may in some measure understand, by considering what it is which is the great disturber of that sleep: it is sin, either in itself, or in its punishment, disease and misery. Therefore to know that Christ has died for you, and to have a reasonable hope, grounded on a good conscience, that, blemished as you are with many infirmities, you have not forfeited the blessing of His Death ; this is the secret of good nights, truly called such, here, and of a quiet and comfortable death-bed when our time shall come. "Good night," in a Christian's mouth, is a solemn word : it is as much as to say, " May the shadow of

the Cross be over you; your sins be forgiven, and you continue a living member of Jesus Christ!"

Once more; we are taught in Holy Scripture to regard the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ as one very especial safeguard for the sleeping, until they wake, and for the dead, until they rise again. In this sense, more particularly, may it be said to Jesus Christ, "Thou, Lord, only, makest me dwell in safety." "° For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself;" the Word of God made Flesh, "p the last Adam, was made a quickening," a life-giving, "spirit." He "quickens our" very "q mortal bodies, by His Spirit that dwelleth in" us. Now this blessing, He Himself assures us, depends on our partaking of His Body and Blood. "r Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." And no less clearly has He assured us, that the Holy Bread and Wine in the Eucharist is His Body and Blood.

It is then in those who worthily receive it, as a Seed of heavenly life, whether they wake, or whether they sleep. By virtue of that holy Communion, they are the Lord's. And shall we suppose that its virtue ends, when we go out of this world? Surely the nearer we draw to Christ, the more powerfully may we expect His blessed influences to work upon us. And we have warrant of Scripture for our hope. The Holy Ghost by S. Paul has taught us to think of the burial of a Christian as of sowing seed: sowing that, which will indeed outwardly and visibly crumble,

° S. John v. 26.

p 1 Cor. xv. 45.

q Rom. viii. 11.

r S. John vi. 53.

decay, and die, but which has yet in it, through all those changes, something which keeps it in a manner alive; which prepares it for a new manifestation of the life that is in it, and a far better one, before long. Christ's Body, received as He has commanded, is to our bodies "a quickening Spirit." "Doth any man doubt," says the excellent Hooker, "but that even from the Flesh of Christ our very bodies do receive that life which shall make them glorious at the latter day, and for which they are already accounted parts of His Blessed Body? Our corruptible bodies could never live the life they shall live, were it not that here they are joined with His Body which is incorruptible." If we cannot understand how this should be, neither can we understand how, whilst we live, we should be truly members of Christ, deriving heavenly life from Him.

To our brethren, therefore, in the grave and in Paradise, no less than to us who are still on earth, we may apply S. Paul's words: "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life," (theirs and ours alike,) "shall appear, then," and not till then, shall the clouds roll away, and the mystery be made plain: then shall we, they and we together (for we are not to prevent them); all, I say, together "shall appear with Him in glory." Till then, it will be all a secret; and as Hooker says again, "The strength of our faith will be tried by those things, wherein our wits and capacities are not strong."

Any how, we cannot believe that the heavenly life, in a Christian continuing such to the end, can

^s Col. iii. 3, 4.

ever die; since our Lord has expressly said, “^tI am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, “^uall live unto Him;” but he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than they; and therefore, if we will speak correctly, no Christian at all can properly be called dead; their bodies, indeed, sleep for a while, but even they have in them the seed of a new life; and their souls are not only living, but in Paradise: that is, in consciousness, hope, and comfort, though not yet in perfect consummation and bliss. And of all this the Holy Communion is the seal, conveying to us the benefit of His death, His burial, His descent into Hell, Who is the true and only Cause and Author of all.

And what if the whole be covered, I will not say with clouds and darkness, but with the skirts of that overpowering glory, which will be about our Blessed Lord, when He shall come at last in our sight? Yet surely the use and comfort of it all is under no cloud, no darkness whatever. Is there a night of our lives, which we might not, if we would, sanctify and bless with this thought; that our lying down to rest is indeed a kind of token, a remembrance and rehearsal of our Lord’s Burial, as plainly and as certainly as sleep is an image of death; and that we, as members of Him, may humbly hope for such care over us, both in our beds and in our graves, as guarded His Blessed Body, during this day’s brief and mysterious rest? Can we look at a sleeping child, or watch

^t S. John xi. 25.

^u S. Luke xx. 38.

by the slumbers of any one whom we love, or whom we are trusted with, and not enter, however faintly, into the transporting yet awful thought, that every moment of their deep quietness is the fruit of His Presence, and the purchase of His Blood? Is it no comfort, when we part with a Christian brother or sister, to know that, if they were such as they seemed, they really are not dead, no, not for a while: their souls are with Christ, and Christ with their bodies in the grave? Is it no gain in our own dying hours, to be rid of perplexing cares and fears, such as even faithful men, wanting these consolations, are apt to be tried with, concerning the condition of our own souls and bodies, between death and resurrection? Finally, is it not one reason more, why the young should make haste to communicate, lest they die without the seed of immortality in them; why those who have begun, should communicate often, to cherish and quicken that spark of divine life; why all should be very much afraid of coming unworthily, lest they stifle and quench it utterly, and depart, after all, not living members of Christ?

SERMON XXIII.

THE REST OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED.

EASTER EVE.

REV. xiv. 13.

“I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

THESE are words of prophecy, relating to some great trial of affliction, which is to come on the Church in the latter days. They seem to tell us, that there will be persecutions and troubles, such as will make it more joyful and consoling than ever to think of those among our friends and brethren, who are gone before us in the Lord. But of course we cannot suppose that as yet we understand their full meaning; only we may suppose that it will be more and more brought out, as the world grows more and more opposed to Jesus Christ and His Gospel, and as the evil days come on, in which our Lord Himself seems to warn us, there will be no faith on the earth.

In particular, we English Christians are instructed by our Church to apply these comfortable words to the case of every brother and sister of ours, every

fellow Christian who departs from us into the world beyond the grave. They are appointed, as you know, to be said at the Burial of the Dead; at that particular moment in the service, when the heart of the mourners is apt to feel most sad, forlorn and desolate; just after the coffin has been lowered into the grave, and we have it brought home to us that with our bodily eyes we shall see no more of the departed, until the great day of his and our resurrection. At that moment, for our relief and warning, the Church directs these gracious words to be sounded in our ears: that we neither sorrow, as men without hope, for those who are fallen asleep in the Lord, nor forget that our own chance of such repose is, as yet, more or less doubtful; that it depends on our own conduct; that it will not be our's, except we have lived so, as that our falling asleep may be in the Lord.

Observe how the verse runs. It is *doubly* gracious; a double message from heaven. First, an Angel's voice is heard, speaking the assurance of comfort, which otherwise one might muse upon as a doubtful thing: then the Holy Spirit, which was in the Apostles and which is now in all Christians, echoes back the word, if I may so speak, signifying that the Dead are happy, not only in being taken out of this present evil world, but in these two special respects: that their toils and cares are at an end, but their good works, the fruit of their toils and cares, are with them in some mysterious way, as a pledge of the great reward prepared for them in the end.

Observe again, very particularly, who they are that are thus spoken of. They are "the dead which die in the Lord:" not all who in this world were Christians

and members of Him, but those who died in that membership. No person, therefore, who died in wilful sin, whether secret or open: for all wilful sin, we know, tends to cut men off from the Body of Christ; and to die in it, is excommunication for ever. But who, having been once justified, united to Christ by Holy Baptism, either die as little infants before they know good and evil; or, by the aid of God's good Spirit, keep themselves pure from wilful sin, that that Wicked one toucheth them not; or, having unhappily so fallen, have yet repented in good time, so that the evil stain is worn out of their robe by long and earnest prayer and penitence: such as these die in the Lord, i. e. are members of Christ when they die; and their death is happy, and their burial peaceful, by virtue of that their union with Christ. In fact, as He was outwardly and bodily crucified yesterday and lay in the grave to-day, so these His faithful servants were inwardly and spiritually crucified with Him. For the Head, be It where It may, cannot be altogether separate from the members, either on the Cross, or in the Grave, or in Heaven.

As therefore our Lord, being laid in the grave, rested altogether from the severe labours and sufferings, which took up His whole life, especially the latter part of it, in this world; so we count them happy, who so die as to be partakers of His rest: no more troubled with fears and temptations, no more in care about themselves or those near and dear to them, or those committed to their charge and for whom they must answer: no longer in doubt, what they ought to do, how to conduct themselves, when duties seem not to agree: never again to be disap-

pointed in others on whom they depend, or vexed at the remembrance, how very imperfectly they have behaved themselves in such and such trials. They will "rest from their labours," both of body, and soul, yet not so as to lose the fruit of their works. The good habits they have formed here; the purity, the holiness, the love of God and their neighbour; will pass with them into Paradise. So will the treasures of a good conscience, the remembrance of deeds well done, and of victories won by the power of the Spirit over the world, the flesh and the devil. Again, their good works will follow them in this way: that they will find themselves prepared, they know not how, for the new and otherwise overpowering objects which will be around them on every side in that hidden, unknown world. The terrors of death, whatever they may be, will be to them assuaged and made tolerable; as in former times it was said to God's saints, "a When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." The faith which during their abode here, they have practised by help of the Holy Spirit, will have so wrought itself into their hearts, as to season them, and make them able to endure the change which would else be too mighty for them.

Nor, perhaps, can we be quite certain, but that, in some unseen way, the Almighty may have work of His own, on which to employ some at least of those faithful and blessed spirits, even in this middle

^a Is. xliii. 2.

space of time, which comes between death and resurrection. Our Lord, we have reason to think, did in some mysterious way do good to some departed souls, during this Eve of His Resurrection, while His Body was reposing in the grave. “^bBeing put to death in the flesh,” He was “quicken^d,” had a new and better life, “by the Spirit, by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” So the Epistle tells us to-day: and we know that some great Saints also have occasionally been employed by the Almighty on some of His errands, since they went to their rest: as Samuel, when he came with that severe message to Saul; and Moses, and Elias, when they appeared in glory, and honoured our Blessed Lord at His Transfiguration. These, to be sure, are dark and hard parts of Scripture, nor would it be safe to build anything upon them, as concerning the case of departed Christians generally: but they may help to put us in mind that we are not so entirely separated from the departed, as flesh and blood would seem to tell us: we, and they still belong to the same Communion of Saints: they remember the Church in their prayers, saying, “^cHow long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” And the Church remembers them in her thanksgivings, blessing God for “all them who have departed this life in His faith and fear;” nay, and she remembers them in her intercession too: for in that same prayer we beg for “grace so to follow their good example, that with them we may be partakers of His heavenly kingdom.” Also in the Burial of the

^b 1 S. Pet. iii. 18, 19.

^c Rev. vi. 10.

Dead, we pray, that not only we, but all those who have departed in the true faith of His Holy Name, may shortly have our perfect consummation and bliss, in His eternal and everlasting glory. And so S. Paul, as the good Bishop Taylor observes, prays for his departed friend Onesiphorus, “^dThe Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.” And who can help wishing, and praying the same in his heart, when he thinks of his departed friends, even the best of them, meeting the terrors of the dreadful hour of judgement?

Surely this is an edifying as well as consoling faith: that by *His* mercy, Who this day lay in the grave, and visited Paradise for our sake, we are not so entirely separated from the dead, but what we may remember them in our solemn offices. Only let us ever remember, that no prayer nor wish of the living will avail for us, when we are gone, in respect of the great concern of all. The moment of death will determine for ever, whether we shall be saved or lost. Let it be our great care to live so, that when our own turn comes to have this heavenly anthem repeated over our own graves, it may be to considerate Christians standing by a word of reasonable hope, and not of sad warning.

^d 2 Tim. i. 18.

SERMON XXIV.

THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS.

FIRST WORD.

PALM SUNDAY.

S. LUKE xxiii. 34.

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

WHEN death is taking out of our sight any one whom we dearly love, we reckon it a providential favour to be allowed to stay near him; we catch all the words that fall from his lips; we treasure them up as precious memorials of him. The fewer words he uttered, the more precious in some sense does each word appear to us: the more carefully do we store it up, and meditate on it the more deeply. The Church then, the faithful Lover of her crucified Saviour, has ever cherished, as part of her best treasure, the few holy and mysterious words which He uttered during the hours of His Passion; His words spoken from the very Cross itself. The first of those sayings is, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” So He prayed, at the very moment of their fastening Him to the accursed tree. Let us, with reverence, try to imagine to ourselves what was then going on. Let us, as we best may, draw the picture of it in our own hearts. It is not

presumptuous to do so ; it is the very employment, for which the Church intended this Holy Week, the holiest in the whole year. God's Will, declared by His Church, is, that we should during these seven days turn aside, as much as ever we can, from all worldly thoughts and joys and businesses, and be quite wrapt up in the one thought of our adorable Lord, hanging on His Cross ; in the one joy of being permitted to draw near and wait on Him in His agonies ; in the one business of confessing our many sins and backslidings which helped to bring the burthen upon Him, and of humbling ourselves before Him. Let us then draw near in fear and wonder, with some such inward prayer as this : " Lord, we know that we are quite unworthy to lift up our eyes towards Thy Cross, much less to touch it with one of our fingers ; but we dare not look away from it, for we know that nowhere else is health and salvation ; and Thou hast said, in Thy loving-kindness, to all that pass by, even to those who are as unworthy as we are, ' Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow.' " Let us try at least to answer that call. Let us come to day to Mount Calvary, and stay there, like faithful disciples, all the week. What is it we see there ? The Most Holy, most Pure, most Merciful, the Son of the Highest, our only Saviour, is dragged up the hill bearing His Cross, which yet He was in body not able to bear : and with Him two thieves. They bring Him to the place, they strip Him naked, they drive their cruel nails through His Hands, and their stake through both His Feet, into the wood of the Cross. So they pierce those Hands, Which had been ever stretched out to bless, in Whose

touch was life and healing : and those Feet Which went about doing good. Then they set the Cross upright, and leave Him to hang upon His Wounds : or rather, they do not leave Him, but sit down to watch Him, to deride and scorn Him, and dare Him to come down from the Cross ; as He had prophesied in the Psalm long before ; “^a All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn ; they shoot out their lips and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in God, that He would deliver Him ; let Him deliver Him, if He will have Him.”

This is the sight we see on Mount Calvary : and what are the words which we hear, besides words of reproach from Christ's enemies ? For the most part, He is like a Lamb, led to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before her shearers, so He openeth not His Mouth^b. But immediately upon their nailing Him to the Cross, when His deadliest bodily pains are beginning, He speaks, His Voice is heard : and what are His Words ? He might have said, “Get you behind Me,” and have swept them at once away from the face of the earth. He might have given the word, and more than twelve legions of Angels would have come to deliver Him. But what saith He ? “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” It was the first Word He spoke on the Cross, the first Intercession He made, as our High Priest, when He was offering the Great Atoning Sacrifice. All, for whom He died, were in His mind, but He speaks first of the very persons who were at that moment using Him so cruelly. He prays for them first, even while they were tearing His Body

^a Ps. xxii. 7, 8.

^b Isa. liii. 7.

to pieces with their un pitying nails and stakes and hammers, and His Soul with their revilings and reproaches. What can we say to such Love, such Forgiveness as this? How does it put to shame our angry and unkind thoughts! how does it reprove us for our great unwillingness to bear even the smallest interference with what we choose to set our hearts upon, the smallest denial of our own rights and comforts! What? shall we have black looks, and sharp words, and bursts of anger, on every slight occasion, while our Lord is being nailed to the Cross, and only utters the meek prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?"

But let us consider a little who they were, for whom He so prayed, and how they knew not what they did. They were the Roman soldiers, who, in obedience to Pilate, had gone on executing all parts of the cruel and bitter sentence against Him. Of course, they had no notion of His Majesty, that He was the Only-Begotten Son of God. His own Apostles as yet hardly knew that. But for these soldiers, we may well believe that they might know little of our Lord, even as a good and holy man. They might not know concerning His innocence, even so much as Pilate did. Their cruelty might be only the rude unmerciful way, which ignorant ungodly people fall into, when any of their fellow creatures are left entirely in their power. It might be, in its measure, much the same as what wicked children are guilty of, when they torment poor dumb creatures, which are any how put into their power. In like manner these soldiers went on with their cruel taunts, and took delight in the torment they were inflicting, and

all the while the Sufferer was not only innocent, not only a righteous man, but the Very and Eternal Son of God, One with the Father, the Creator and Upholder of all things, even of themselves, who were so treating Him. Truly they knew not what they did. But is not this a most awful thing to think of? It might seem to themselves and to the world, that they were only indulging, in one instance more, a fault common to such sort of people as they were. But in very deed all the while they were stripping, and insulting, nailing to the Cross, Him Who created them, the Son of God, God Himself. How ought this to make us tremble, when we call to mind the ordinary daily sins, which we have gone on thinking so lightly of, it may be for many years! We cannot tell of any one of them, how far it may reach, how grievously it may affront the Almighty, what suffering it may cause to some of those who are dearest to Him. Remember, Christ reckons what is done to His members, as if it were done to Himself. When we are unkind to any of them, truly we know not what we do: we have need to lose no time in casting ourselves at His Feet, and beseeching Him to give us part in His prevailing prayer; "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

But our Lord put up that prayer, not for the soldiers only, but for the Jews also, who had delivered Him into their hands. For to them too belonged the guilt of His Crucifixion, and even more than to the soldiers, by how much they knew more of Jesus Christ, of His most pure and holy life, and most merciful miracles. They knew that He was a righteous and innocent person, yet even of them we read in

the Acts of the Apostles, that their guilt was in some measure lessened by some sort of ignorance they were in regarding Him. S. Peter, in his address to the multitude, who ran together at the healing of the cripple at the Beautiful gate of the Temple^c, after charging them with denying the Holy One and the Just, and desiring a murderer to be granted unto them; after saying, "Ye killed the Prince of Life," adds those mild and merciful words, "Brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." The Apostle is here speaking, by the Spirit of Christ, in the same tone of heavenly forgiveness, as Christ Himself when He said, "They know not what they do." S. Paul too says something like it of himself: I was "^da blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." S. Paul was so ignorant of the truth concerning Christ, that he thought whoever persecuted the Christians was doing God service. The Jews and their rulers, though they knew that He was a good man, and that the charges they brought against Him were false, yet knew not of His great and exceeding dignity: knew not that He was the very Christ, "^eGod manifest in the flesh." They knew that their doings were false and cruel; but, how unspeakably impious they were, *that* they knew not. Yet the gracious and most merciful Saviour, in His overflowing love and pity, prayed for such as these, and obtained for them the offer of His Holy Spirit: so that many were pricked to the heart with godly sorrow, and repented and believed, and entered into the kingdom of heaven.

^c Acts iii. 17.^d 1 Tim. i. 13.^e Ib. iii. 16.

The heathen soldiers, who actually crucified our Lord, the Scribes and Pharisees who put Him into their hands, the zealous but ignorant Jews, who with Saul persecuted the Church: for all these our Lord prayed in the moment of His Sacrifice, and by virtue of that prayer they might be admitted to repentance and mercy. But if there be any who sin as they did, not having their excuse of ignorance, but knowing what they do, will Christ's Intercession avail such persons? Did He mean such as they are, when He said, "Father, forgive them?" This is indeed a most serious question to us all. For which of us can fairly say that in his own wilful transgressions he has the same excuse which the Church's first persecutors, and even our Lord's murderers, had? None of us surely, when we break Christ's commands, act as S. Paul did, under the notion that we ought to do such things. The thief does not imagine it his duty to steal, nor the profane person to swear, nor the false person to lie. What reason then have we to think, that our Lord's Prayer for those who knew not what they did, can possibly obtain a blessing for us?

Again, a Christian who knows the Creed, yet wilfully breaks any of the commandments, cannot say, as the Jews might, that he knew not, against Whom he sinned. The soldiers, who tore and pierced our Lord's blessed Body, might think of Him only as of a vile Jewish malefactor: the Jews who cried, "Crucify Him," might regard Him as one who dealt with evil spirits: but we, when we disobey Him, do so, knowing Who He Is. What hope then remains for us, seeing we are without the excuse, such as it was, of Christ's murderers, yet are partakers of their sin?

I say, "we are partakers of their sin," for so the Holy Ghost has expressly declared. Those, He says, who have been enlightened, and "fall away," "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh." You may read it in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Again in the tenth chapter we are told, "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth," we "tread under foot the Son of God." Whether then we believe it or no, it is certain that every wilful sin in a Christian puts him along with Christ's murderers. Whether we lie, steal, bear malice, indulge evil thoughts, or whatever other work of the devil, or vanity of the world, or sinful lust of the flesh we deliberately indulge in, we make ourselves to be as some of those who pierced our Lord's Hands and Feet, who stood staring and looking upon Him in mockery. In some mysterious way we join with them: we add sorrow to His sorrow. Thus it has been with us, as often as ever, since our being made members of Him in Baptism, we have knowingly broken any of His holy commandments. We have put forth our hands, and helped to crucify Him; and that, although we knew, or ought to know, what we were doing. What reason have we to hope that we too may be of the number of those, for whom He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?" Truly we could have no hope, were it not for that infinite overflowing mercy of His, which, if we do but now truly and perseveringly repent, will, we know, make allowance for all our weaknesses and errors and ignorances. We dare not make allowance for them ourselves: we know not how far they were

our own fault; but if we truly and unfeignedly give ourselves up, soul and body, to do and suffer His Will, He will allow for them. He will forgive us the grievous and shameful things, for which we cannot forgive ourselves. Even of the best instructed among Christians it may be truly said, that he knows not what he does, when he breaks his baptismal vow. We cannot exactly feel even for our fellow-creatures: we know not the pain we inflict on them by any sort of cruelty or unkindness: those hard-hearted executioners knew not the torture, to which they were putting our Lord's Sacred Body: how much less can any of us know, how His Divine Soul and the souls of those in communion with Him may be wounded by our sins, secret or open: for none of them are secret to Him? Who can measure the pain, the shame, the disorder, which a single bad action in a Christian person may cause in the world and kingdom of the Almighty, each part of which is so wonderfully linked and entwined with every other part? If a Christian, for example, knowing Christ's command to the contrary, permits himself at any time to have eyes full of adultery, how does he know, (besides the present corruption to his own soul,) what encouragement he may give to evil and unclean spirits watching near, and what help they may find in laying their snares for him and others? So it is with all manner of sins. It is most true that when we commit them, we know not what we do. And it is a sad truth also, that many are brought up in such a way that it seems hardly possible to avoid committing them. Many, too many young children, are actually taught by their parents to lie and de-

ceive. If they are not told to do so, they have the example constantly set before them. Such persons are so far in a condition like that of heathens or unbelievers: when they come to know better, to understand the sin of lying, and truly to hate and forsake it, we may confidently hope that they will be entirely forgiven, as not knowing what they did: even as heathens and unbelievers are in Holy Baptism entirely forgiven the sins they had committed before it. And so in all other cases, where a fault is in any respect really such as could not be helped, no doubt the good and gracious One, Who is touched with a feeling of all our infirmities, will remember us favourably when He comes to be our Judge.

As we venture to look for such mercy ourselves, let us, for our Saviour's sake, be very gentle and charitable to our brethren, whenever we see them overtaken in a fault: more especially to those who wrong us. We may always feel quite certain, that they know not what they do; they do not mean all the mischief and misery, which we perhaps see clearly must follow upon their doings.

And by the same rule, we can hardly be too strict with ourselves: for we may be quite sure that we too are subject to the same blindness we see in them. We may be quite sure that we are continually doing things, concerning which even our brethren can see that we knew not what we did: how much more He to Whom all things are present, Who sees the end of all from the beginning! Let us then watch earnestly for the least whispers of our conscience; for surely they are whispers from God Almighty Himself. To disregard them, is throwing away the

benefit of our Lord's merciful Intercession! For when we go on in our bad ways, in despite of that Voice within, it can no longer be said of us that we know not what we do.

At this time in particular that awful Voice seems to say, "If you would have forgiveness for throwing away, more or less ignorantly, so many holy times and seasons in the years that are gone by, do not throw away this one, concerning which you have been solemnly warned. Let the time past of your life suffice you to have neglected the Cross of Christ. Put this Holy Week, which is beginning, to its proper use, the earnest contemplation of His Sufferings. Fix there the eyes of your heart; study His Wounds: watch the Blood flowing from His Side. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." Behold, and judge whether there can be any excuse for you, if you go on adding to that Sorrow by any known sin. But if you truly repent, confess, and amend, then fear not but He will make full allowance for your not knowing what you did, when in times past you so grievously sinned against Him.

SERMON XXV.

THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS.

SECOND WORD.

MONDAY.

S. LUKE xxiii. 43.

“To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

You have heard in the catechising, which was the second of the seven words spoken on the Cross: viz. the saying of our Lord to the Penitent Thief. Our Lord had now been hanging for some considerable time, as it may seem, on the weight of His Wounds. For the rulers, there had been time for deriding Him; and for several to pass by, one after another, and to join in their scornful cruel words; and for the soldiers to sit down and divide His garments, and cast lots for His coat; and for the Chief Priests to remonstrate with Pilate about the title on the Cross, and to receive Pilate's answer; and especially we are to observe, there had been time for one of the thieves, both of whom at first railed on Him, to mark His holy Patience and suffering Majesty, and thereupon to be moved to an entire change of mind concerning Him. All this time our Lord had been silent. None of the cruel taunts of His enemies could move Him. He had noticed them once to pray for them, that they might be forgiven, as not knowing what

they did, and then He goes on to suffer for them in silence. Not their reproaching, but the prayer of the repenting malefactor, has power to cause Him to break that awful Silence again. As His first Word had been, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" so His second Word is; "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." It is well to consider the two sayings together: for so we perceive clearly the beginning of the great salvation, which our Lord was then working for us all. We perceive in the repentance and absolution of that malefactor the first token of our Lord's prayer having been heard, when He said, "Father, forgive them." For this, as well as the other malefactor, had begun by reproaching our Lord. S. Matthew expressly tells us, "The thieves" (not one of them only, but) "the thieves also which were crucified with Him," cast in His teeth the same reproach as the Scribes and others had done: "He saved others, Himself He cannot save."

A most miserable thing to think of, that even in the midst of such cruel bodily pains, which they were suffering according to the sentence of the law, they should find sense, and breath, and voice, for nothing but to reproach and blaspheme the Son of God. A miserable thought: and the more miserable, because it puts us so sadly in mind of what we see and feel but too often; how possible it is to sin and affront God more and more in the midst of suffering and punishment: what power the Evil one has over us, to make us discontented, rebellious, unbelieving, when God's Hand is laid on us for our good.

And on the other hand, the changed and amended

behaviour of one of the two thieves shews us the right use to be made of God's sore judgements. "We indeed" suffer "justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss." And then turning unto Jesus he said, "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom." Now we too, my brethren, whoever we are, have some sort of cross to bear; something in our condition, which we could wish otherwise: something, which we should be glad to change and we cannot. And perhaps we have gone on hitherto in an unbelieving temper, as regards this, whatever it be. We have been discontented: and discontent is unbelieving; as those witness every day, who live among sick and poor people, and hear how they talk of their own hardships, until they have learned to take them in a Christian way. Such persons seem to say to our Lord, hanging in their sight upon His Cross, "If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. If we are to believe and depend on Thee, do us some present good: make our pains less, or our condition more comfortable:" that is, in other words, "take us down from the cross, that we may see and believe." This is direct unbelief, and no better. Yet it is the temper, I grieve to say, of by far the greater portion of those who call themselves Christians. Not only the sick and the poor, but all, so far as they indulge discontent, are as evil-doers, fastened to some sort of cross, with Christ's Cross in sight, yet unbelieving. Think only of this very common circumstance, that so many people decline all thoughts of coming to Christ to have life in the Holy Communion, because they are ill-off, or troubled in mind. If He does not

save them from their present calamity, be it what it may, they will not account Him Christ: they will not come at His call: they turn sullenly away from Him, and live and die, if not blaspheming, yet refusing to hearken to Him.

But He, at this time especially, lifts up His Cross in our sight, and would have us turn towards Him, and see what is there to be seen: His meek and innocent Head bowed down in silence, submitting to all the reproaches which we have deserved; His pure and holy Limbs, that never were the ministers of any the least sin, torn to pieces with those deadly unspeakable pangs. Surely if, but for some short time, we would fasten our eyes there, we shall find new thoughts entering into our hearts: we shall be ashamed to lie so unquiet upon our beds of deserved pain, while He, the Most Holy One, is so calm and patient from beginning to end of His bitter agony. Instead of insolently demanding present relief, we shall give ourselves up contentedly to Him, with only one prayer, that He would remember us when He comes to judge the world: that our punishment may be here, rather than there; our refreshment there rather than here.

See in the case of this penitent malefactor, what a gracious Absolution is provided for those who thus earnestly and in time repent of their discontented thoughts, and turn to Christ's Cross, once for all, that they may learn of Him, how to bear their own. Jesus said unto him, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." He Who spake not, to reprove and confound His revilers, speaks out immediately to revive and comfort the only one

of them who relented and made confession. The Lord, in the midst of His humiliation, puts off His veil for a moment, and speaks with authority and power, as Head of the Church, and Judge of the quick and dead. And whereas the thief had only asked to be remembered, when Christ should come in His Kingdom, Christ meets him with an immediate assurance, that, on that very day, he should be with Him in Paradise. He would have been contented to wait God's time, and even to die, if need were, in doubt, so he might be favourably looked on at last. But the merciful Saviour will not keep him waiting: He hastens to declare His forgiveness, like the Father of the prodigal son, who, seeing him yet a great way off, ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And so it has ever been with His true Priests on earth, when any come in true penitence to confess their sins and humble themselves in earnest. They make haste to forgive: they even overflow with joy, to welcome him, who has wandered, home again.

Thus did our Saviour on the Cross, for the instruction of Ministers and comfort of penitents in all times, carry on the exercise of His Priestly Office. As His first words had been words of intercession, "Father, forgive:" so were these next, words of Absolution. And both had everlasting power and virtue sealed to them by the great atoning Sacrifice, which He was in the act of offering.

Not that the gracious words brought to this penitent any kind of immediate relief or deliverance from his outward and bodily sufferings. After he had heard them, he still continued in the deadly pangs of crucifixion, longer even than our Lord Himself.

For we read that by and by, when it became necessary to take them all down from their crosses, and the soldiers came to break their legs, both the one and the other of the two thieves were found alive, and had that new pain to bear. So that in this world there was no difference to be seen with the eye between the penitent and impenitent.

But in the other world, and out of all sight, great indeed was the difference, and entire his deliverance. The moment his grievous pains had driven his soul from his body, it was in Paradise with our Lord, to rest until the Day of Judgement under the shadow of the Almighty, with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets, and then to sit down with them for ever in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Let afflicted sinners confess as he did, instead of vainly pleading for themselves; let them humbly and heartily say, "We indeed suffer justly, for we receive but what we deserve: but do Thou, Lord, remember us hereafter." Then shall it be with them, as with this forgiven thief. For the virtue of the Cross is not worn out, and the absolving Saviour is yet with us in His Church.

SERMON XXVI.

THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS.

FOURTH WORD.^a

WEDNESDAY.

S. MATT. xxvii. 46.

“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

It may be observed concerning the seven Words or sentences, which our Blessed Lord uttered on the Cross, that the first three differ, in two remarkable respects, from the last four. The first three, uttered in the beginning of His dreadful pangs, just after He was nailed to the Cross, relate to other persons: to His murderers, for whom He prayed, “Father, forgive them:” to the penitent thief, whom He comforted with the promise to be with Him in Paradise: to His Mother and S. John, whom He recommended to each other’s care. But the other sayings were all spoken at very short intervals, just towards the end of His sufferings: and related all of them to Himself, to what He was undergoing, both in Soul and Body: they were such words as men, overpowered by the pains of death, are often accustomed to utter. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” “I thirst:” “It is finished:” “Father, into Thy Hands

^a Sermons on the third and seventh Words were preached by the Rev. P. Young, and were never written by J. K.

I commend My Spirit." These were His last sayings, before He gave up the Ghost: and you see they all express what He was Himself enduring, how His Soul and Body were taken up at the time.

Another thing perhaps worth remarking is, that the first three sayings were uttered in the ordinary light of day; the last four, in that astonishing darkness which overspread the whole earth. It is plain that our Saviour had spoken to His Mother and S. John before that darkness came on, for they were seen, we are given to understand, by Him and by each other. This must have been some while before twelve o'clock: for at the sixth hour, i.e., at twelve o'clock, "there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour," i.e., until three o'clock in the afternoon. The sun was darkened, as if night had suddenly fallen: and under the veil of that darkness were said and done all the awful things which accompanied the very moment of our Lord's expiring. But for a long time, it seems, there was silence as well as darkness. From the sixth hour to the ninth hour neither did our Lord Himself speak, His Divine Soul and Body being more and more oppressed with the fearful and mysterious agonies of His death; and His enemies, it may seem, were silent; overawed perhaps by the horrible great darkness, and uneasily wondering what the event might be.

It would do us all good, if when we ourselves are in silence and darkness, e. g., when we lie awake at midnight, we would remember and imagine that silence and darkness, when the whole world, Angels and Saints on the one hand, sinners and blasphemers on the other, seemed to be waiting round the Cross of

the Redeemer of the world. As they were ignorant, so neither can we tell at any moment, what astonishing work the Almighty may even now be carrying on for the salvation or correction of us and other sinners. Silence and darkness, as they put us in mind of the Almighty, so may they well remind us of our Saviour's Cross.

But at length it is time to break that Silence; the Voice of the crucified and reproached Redeemer is heard again through the gloom, crying out in the pangs of death. And what are His words? "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Most awful and mysterious words, concerning which we must ever remember, as concerning all the words which the Son addressed to the Father, that they must have deep meanings, infinitely beyond what the highest Angel can imagine. It is little to say that we know not their full sense, or that we never shall know, for "b the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." However, in proportion to our love and obedience, He will give us to know more and more; and thus much we may seem to know already, that the words, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" represent the sufferings of His Soul, as the next words, "I thirst," those of His Body. Now, our own death is to every one of us an entire secret, we know not what hidden pang of soul there may be in it; what feeling of separation from God, to which our Lord's words may relate; and possibly they may be such words, as we shall only then begin to understand in the very moment of death.

At all events we are quite sure that they are words

^b 1 Cor. ii. 11.

of most infinite charity and condescension ; spoken by Him, not as He is Son of God, God of God, Light of Light, of One Substance with the Father ; for in that sense it cannot be that the Father should forsake Him : in that sense He was reigning with the Father in heaven at the moment of His Death, no less than at all times. But the outcry, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " so far as it bespeaks suffering, is altogether of the Man Christ Jesus, taking on Him the sufferings of His Church and of all believers : it is the Head speaking in the name of the whole Body.

And there is this gracious mark of His most loving recollection of us, when He uttered those words, that they are not words then made by Himself for the purpose, but they are taken out of one of the Psalms ; they are the first words of the twenty-second Psalm : which seems to have been made at first when David was in grievous sickness, but the words of it are so ordered by the Holy Spirit, that they should exactly represent the sufferings both in soul and body (so far as words could represent those sufferings) of our Lord on the Cross. By His using these words then He declares His entire fellow-feeling with His whole Church and with each member of it, which had been wont to use the same words, and others like them in their affliction and sickness. When all seems dark within and around us, when we are sad beyond measure, and down-hearted with the feeling, as if God had forsaken us, then, if we be members of the Crucified Jesus, if we have not quite forfeited our portion in Him by impenitent wickedness, then may we remember these His dying words, and be sure that He is

with us in His pity and compassion. When it seems to us, as if our prayers were not heard, let us reflect that, in some sense, the Father seemed far from Christ's complaint. "c Oh my God," He says, "I cry and Thou hearest not:" and in another place, "d when I cry and shout, He shutteth out my prayer." If we seem to have no rest, day nor night, does not the Saviour of the world say, "I cry in the day-time and Thou hearest not, and in the night-season also I take no rest?" If the thought comes over us with a bitter pang of those who in former times, as it seemed to us, or in our own, have served God in comfort and calmness, so even Christ speaks here, and teaches His Church to speak, "Our fathers hoped in Thee, they trusted in Thee, and Thou didst deliver them: they called upon Thee, and were holpen: they put their trust in Thee, and were not confounded." If we are troubled above measure at the feeling of scorn and contempt, as if we were good for nothing, and every one knew us to be so: doth not our King and Saviour cry out, "I am a worm and no man: a very scorn of men, and the out-cast of the people; all they that see Me, laugh Me to scorn?" If we seem to ourselves more and more troubled, thinking on God's mercies in time past, and fearing lest He should never look kindly on us again, He Who knew no sin, cried out, "Thou art He that took Me out of My Mother's womb; Thou wast My hope, when I hanged yet upon My Mother's breasts; I have been left unto Thee ever since I was born; Thou art My God, even from My Mother's womb. O go not from Me, for trouble is hard at hand, and there is none to help Me." In which words the remembrance of past

c Ps. xxii. 2.

d Lam. iii. 8.

mercies appears to embitter His feeling of present desolation. If we fear evil men and (still worse) evil spirits: does not our Lord speak as one encompassed with "bulls of Basan," with "many dogs," with wicked ones who are "like a ramping and a roaring lion?" Thus, whatever painful and miserable feeling a true penitent may have in his soul, our Lord, bearing our sins, endured the same, only far worse: and that last mysterious Cry of His was a cry of mercy not for Himself so much as for all His afflicted and poor people.

The bystanders indeed, when they heard it, made a strange mistake concerning it. He cried out, "Eli, Eli," which in the Hebrew language is, "My God, My God:" and they imagined He was calling for Elias, that is for Elijah the Prophet, whose return had been foretold in the Old Testament, and whom the Jews rather expected about this time. Still it was a strange and an ignorant mistake, and shewed how little those persons attended to the Lessons and Psalms which they heard continually: yet it was not stranger nor more ignorant than the notions which many Christians have of the words and meaning of the Bible and Prayer Book, and of many other holy things. We live and die in the most unaccountable mistakes on such matters, and miss a great deal of what God would have us know, merely because we will not take the trouble to attend when He speaks, and keep our thoughts from wandering: just as these persons lost the true meaning of Christ's solemn prayer to His Father out of the Psalms, because in former times they had not attended to the Psalms as they ought to have done.

Christian friends and neighbours! we have need to pray God that we may not be, any of us, like them: that we may not, by childish carelessness, lose the fruit of any of His Divine words and deeds in that His last awful hour. But as He called on His Father, so let us call on Him and, whatever happens, betake ourselves always to His Cross. Call on Him in life and in death, but especially call on Him in such trial and temptation as He seems to have submitted to for us, when He cried out, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" When you feel most inclined to despair, as if the Almighty, your soul's life, were gone from you, never to return, then remember that Christ uttered this cry for your sakes. As He bore the death of the body, the separation of body and soul, so He felt for a while, as if He should bear the death of the soul, the separation of the soul from God. He bore this for a while, but still committed Himself to God, and in a short time His agonized Soul and Body were at rest, and, after a short time more, in glory. If we patiently and penitently endure, we also shall reign with Him. But neither ought we to overlook the fearful warning which the same words convey to the stubborn and impenitent. He bore the sense of God's wrath for us, and it forced that dreadful cry from Him. Judge then, how shall we be able to bear the like burthen, not for three hours, but for ever!

SERMON XXVII.

THE LAST WORDS.

FIFTH WORD.

THURSDAY.

S. JOHN XIX. 28.

“ I Thirst.”

OUR Lord's sufferings in soul and body appear to have come to their height about the same moment; that is to say, at the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. For as S. Matthew and S. Mark inform us that just at that time He cried out, “^a My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” so we learn from S. John that almost in the same breath He said, “I thirst.” His calling upon His Father in that manner expressed the deep affliction of His Soul: His complaint of thirst signified how overpowering His pains had become, how He was even worn out by them. That the two complaints were made nearly together, is plain from what follows. Our Saviour's complaint concerning God's abandoning Him was made in the Hebrew tongue, and began with the words *Eli, Eli*, i. e., My God, My God. Immediately after this, one ran and filled a sponge with vinegar and put it upon hyssop, and put it on a reed and put it to His Mouth^b; while the others

^a S. Matt. xxvii. 46. S. Mark xv. 34.

^b S. John xix. 29.

cried out in scorn, "Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to take Him down." But S. John informs us that this last was done, because of our Lord's saying, "I thirst." The two sayings therefore were uttered as nearly as possible together, and belonged both of them, to the very moment of death: the one, to the sinking of heart and spirits which fell upon Him as our Surety, bearing our sins, in the apprehension that God was forsaking Him: the other, to the feverish bodily thirst which usually goes before death, especially when persons are worn out with sharp pain. The one is the crown and consummation of His bodily anguish; the other, of the far greater anguish He endured in His Soul.

Accordingly, this thirst had been prophesied of, among the other particulars of His Passion. "c My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaveth to my gums, and Thou shalt bring Me into the dust of death." And again, "d I am weary of crying: My throat is dry: My sight faileth Me for waiting so long upon My God." To those who have no experience it might seem strange that thirst should be reckoned in this manner among the last and worst and deadliest symptoms of the very sharpest pain. But such no doubt it is. Nothing is more common than for the dying to express it as the last earthly thing they care for: especially when they are much worn with pain and restlessness.

One thing however is here to be especially noticed: that our Blessed Lord's sufferings were different from all others, in being altogether voluntary. He had power to lay down His life, and He had

c Ps. xxii. 15.

d Ib. lxix. 3.

power to take it again: every throb of bodily pain, and of bitter anguish in His Divine Soul, He might have saved Himself, if He would: whereas we all, when our hour is come, have no choice but we must bear what God lays upon us: patiently or impatiently, we must however endure it. Thus whereas groans and outcries, and complaints of pain and thirst and weariness, are forced from us in our hours of sickness, our Saviour in crying out, "I thirst," was not moved merely by the greatness of His suffering; for He could have endured it in silence if He would: but He spake the word, we read, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." Thus He shewed at the same moment both His true Manhood, in suffering as dying men suffer, and His Godhead, still glorious and unimpaired, in the command which He had over His own sufferings.

But the Psalms, you will observe, foretold not the fact only of the sad thirst which should oppress our dying Lord, but the manner also in which the attendants, most of them in a mischievous, some few perhaps in a penitent mind, should go on to supply His want. "eThey gave Me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty, they gave Me vinegar to drink." So David had long before prophesied in the sixty ninth Psalm: and accordingly at the beginning of our Lord's Passion we read, "fThey gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall, and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink:" and from time to time, as He hung upon the tree, the soldiers kept mocking Him, "g coming to Him and offering Him

e Ps. lxi. 22.

f S. Matt. xxvii. 34.

g S. Luke xxiii. 36.

vinegar.” But hitherto He had refused to drink. Now however He accepted it as the last drop in His bitter cup: and “having received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His Head,” and with one loud cry more He gave up His Spirit into the hands of His Father.

Like the rest of this mournful and awful history, this circumstance of our Lord’s thirst, no doubt, is full of deep and heavenly mysteries. I shall now observe upon it in one way only, viz., as it was the end, apparently, of His bodily sufferings, and by it He condescended to sanctify and hallow all affliction, little and great, and make it a blessing to His people, as helping to unite them with Him. There is a great deal, a very great deal in the Old Testament, about bodily pain and anguish: whereby all men might understand God’s merciful and compassionate remembrance of such as suffer in that way: and that such agonies, if men do not hinder it by their sins, are in some secret way blessed and hallowed, and cause them to come nearer to God. How full are the Psalms of verses to that effect^h. “My loins are filled with a sore disease, and there is no whole part in my body.” “My strength faileth me, because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.” “My sore ran and ceased not in the night-season: my soul refused comfort.” “My bones are burned up as it were a firebrand: my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh.” “My knees are weak through fasting: my flesh is dried up for want of fatness.” Again, think of the whole history of Job, smitten as he was

^h Ps. xxxviii. 7. Ib. xxxi. 12. Ib. lxxvii. 2. Ib. cii. 3, 5. Ib. cix. 23.

with sore boils from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot: his complaints are, as it were, a storehouse where sick and agonizing persons may find words of lamentation. Once more, think of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the dismal, bitter words of suffering which meet us there in almost every verse. “ⁱ I am the man, that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath . . . My flesh and my skin He hath made old; He hath broken my bones. He hath caused the arrows of His quiver to enter into my reins. He hath filled me with bitterness; He hath made me drunken with wormwood. He hath also broken my teeth with gravelstones, He hath covered me with ashes.” All these and many, very many, more such sayings, set down by God’s Holy Spirit in His Book, might well prove His merciful remembrance of all sorts and degrees of the pain, wherewith it pleases Him in His mysterious wisdom to try and discipline us, His poor sinful creatures. But how infinitely beyond all of these are the pains of the Only-Begotten Son, God Himself, the Most High God, stooping and coming down from Heaven, and vouchsafing in His own Blessed Person to endure all that those agonized sufferers endured, and far more than they: and so to give assurance that He feels with us in all our afflictions, greater and lesser, so far as they cause us any real anguish! David on his couch of penitential sickness, Job sitting among the ashes, Jeremiah mourning in his dungeon, were but so many shadows and types of the king and head of all sufferers, the Man of all Sorrows, in those three dark hours on His Cross. And as the shadow and

ⁱ Lam. iii. 1, 4, 13, 15, 16.

type is evermore far less in its kind than the truth and substance, so were all their agonies nothing compared with His.

And virtue goes out from His Cross on every side : both backward, to sanctify and bless the sufferings of those who died before He was born, and forward through all times of the Christian Church, for a blessing on our sufferings. So it has been ever understood. The Saints' and Martyrs' agonies have been accounted by the Church blessed and holy, because they were in a manner Christ's agonies, He, the Head, suffering continually in His members, by virtue of that true union which is betwixt Him and them. So S. Paul speaks of his own sufferings for the good of those whom he watched over : he says that in what he had to bear he was filling up what remained of "the afflictions of Christ in" his "flesh, for His Body's sake, which is the Church." Blessed indeed with a most heavenly and unspeakable blessing are they, who, suffering really and willingly for Christ's sake, have imparted to them a more than common share of the glory and virtue of His Cross ; who have their own crosses planted, as it were, close within the shadow of His. That indeed is too great an honour for ordinary Christians, stained with sin after Baptism, to dream of. Yet even their sufferings, even our sufferings, my brethren, if patiently endured with an eye to the Cross, are an exercise of Christian penitence, have grace to join us more and more to Him, and tend in some mysterious but real way to the putting away of sin. In any case therefore it must be our wisdom to pray for such faith as

may welcome pain and anguish, and not only bear with it: for, whether we have kept our baptismal vow, those pangs ought to be welcome, which brighten our crown and make it like the crown of martyrs: or whether (as most, alas!) we have broken it, what greater favour than to be allowed a chance of doing something towards the healing of our sin by enduring its punishment well?

Neither let us neglect the lesson which our Lord's dying thirst conveys, as to the high privilege and honour of waiting on others who are in pain or near death. A cup of cold water, we read, given to any of His little ones, will in no wise lose its reward: and in that He complained of thirst on the Cross, He seems to say to all nurses, all who are called to care for the sick, even in such little things as moistening their parched lips, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

¹ S. Matt. xxv. 40.

SERMON XXVIII.

THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS.

SIXTH WORD.

GOOD FRIDAY.

S. JOHN XIX. 30.

“It is finished.”

“WHEN Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished.” That is, first of all, His sufferings are ended. He has no more deadly pangs to endure, no moments and hours of anguish to spend, hanging upon the weight of His wounds: no heart-breaking throbbings; no inward sinkings, no mysterious apprehensions of being forsaken of His God and Father. But now the darkness, the cloud and thick darkness which hung over the place of His death, will pass away; the Sacred Body will be laid in a quiet grave by affectionate and religious hands, wrapped in clean linen, with spices duly prepared. There will be no more scorn and mockery; no more pain, no more outrage. It will remain in the keeping of Angels until Easter-day morning, when It will again be united to the Divine Soul, and they two shall never more be divided for ever. And as to that most Pure and Holy Soul, that it was in Paradise in that

interval, we know, for so He promised the penitent Thief; and also that it was in some place which is called Hell, for the Creed says, "He descended into Hell," and the Psalm, "^aThou wilt not leave My Soul in Hell." We are told also ^b that He preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah." But His Soul, which remained united to His Godhead, could not suffer more. For the Atonement, for which He suffered, was completed. In three days the Soul of Jesus Christ was united again to His Body, and He arose from the dead.

Our Blessed Lord's Sufferings then were finished for ever, when He bowed His Head and gave up the Ghost: and as He Himself had asked before, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow;" so in the safe and quiet slumber of His Sacred Body, which still remained united with God, the Temple of God, He seems, as it were, to ask of us again, "Is it nothing to you? Behold, and see if there be any rest, any refreshment, equal to My rest and refreshment, wherewith the Lord hath visited Me in the day of His mercy?" Who is there among us, who thinks of this as he ought? Who is there so deeply and truly impressed with the conscious feeling, that Jesus Christ is indeed his best and only friend? Who has watched so dutifully by Him in all His sufferings, as to feel it a real relief and joy, when the thought comes over them, that He can die and suffer no more? If it were a brother or a friend, put out of the reach of misery by some sudden turn of what men call

^a Ps. xvi. 11.

^b 1 S. Peter iii. 19, 20.

good fortune, it would be a bright day indeed, we should hardly know how to thank God enough for it, we should be ashamed to indulge, for that day at least, in any kind of discontent or fretfulness.

But besides our Lord's release from His Sufferings, this cry of His, "It is finished," announces also the completion of His Sacrifice. It being the everlasting counsel of the Father and the Son, that the Son should in due time come down from Heaven, and offer Himself an Atonement for our sins, that awful mystery was not to take place all at once, but by degrees, in set form and order, in such a manner as, when one came to think of it, might teach one more and more of the true nature of His sufferings: that He died not as any other good man and faithful Martyr, but in very deed as one atoning for our sins. What is the notion of an atoning Sacrifice, which the Holy Scripture plainly sets before us? It is some clean unblemished creature, solemnly devoted to God with prayer, then slaughtered before Him, the innocent slaughtered for the guilty, and his blood poured out upon the Altar. This was the true notion of sacrifice, and to all this our Saviour's death answered in a wonderful way. He was the Lamb without spot or blemish, the only un sinning of all the children of Adam: and His Sacred Blood was poured out for us to-day without stint or measure, upon the Altar of the Cross, after He had shewn Himself a worthy Sacrifice by His Holy and more than Angelical life, and after He had been solemnly set apart and led on through all lesser sufferings to that the last and greatest agony.

All this He did for us, my brethren, and for those

who are dear to us; and shall we not at least do this little for His sake, namely, look to His Passion continually, put our whole trust in it, mingle the remembrance of it with all that we do and suffer, all that we fear and hope, enjoy or submit to? Surely, if we are in pain or want, and most especially, if we be ill-used by any one, if we thought of what He bore, it should make us ashamed to repine. Surely, when we are in peace and prosperity, it should sober and chasten us to reflect, that He bought this and the quiet enjoyment of all other blessings for us at that unspeakable inconceivable cost. Again the thought of the Cross should accompany us in all our good works, all our holy and religious services. Whether we pray, sing praise, attend to His Word, receive the Communion, confess our sins, punish ourselves for them, abstain from temptations, put ourselves out of the way to serve Him and do good to our neighbour, or whatever other acceptable thing we try to do, we should remember always that these things do us good if they bring us nearer the Cross of Christ, if they help us in applying to ourselves the wholesome medicines of His Death and Passion. Their virtue is all from Him: they have none of themselves: and therefore the Church instructs us, whenever we offer ourselves and our works in prayer to God, to add the solemn words, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord:" meaning that through Him only and by real union with Him can we or any of our works be justified or accepted.

Now I hear some say, when they are spoken to on their sins, or on neglect of some plain duty, such as going to Church or keeping themselves from deeds of

impurity, that, in good truth, they do not know they have any thing in particular to repent of : they know all men are sinners, and they suppose themselves are so too, but they see no particular occasion to humble themselves. They confess, as it has been said, "sin," but not "sins:" they speak as if what sinfulness they have were entirely Adam's fault, not at all their own. Of this sort of temper a great deal may be said : but at present only one question shall be asked. "What is Good Friday to such persons? What have they to do with the Cross who, while our Blessed Saviour is pouring out His Life-Blood for their sins, while His whole Divine Soul and Body is torn with the agony caused by those sins, can yet so calmly say, they know of no such great reason why they should repent, no such serious wrong that they have done?" Surely as far as they go, they seem by their words to make void our Sacrifice : they speak and behave as if Christ were dead in vain. Surely they have need to fear and suspect, that it is much worse with them than they feel : and to pray earnestly for the grace of compunction and deep sorrow of heart for their sins : without which they never can love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Thirdly, our Lord's saying, "It is finished," assures us of the full accomplishment of the types and prophecies, relating to His Death, whereof the Old Testament is full. For in truth that wonderful Sacrifice, which He then finished offering, had been going on in shadow and figure from the very beginning of His dealings with His own people. As often as the Jews killed their Paschal lamb, and sprinkled the blood of it, as the Law commanded, they shewed the Lord's

Death beforehand, till He came and died in His own Person. So did every sacrifice for sin : so did Abraham, when he offered Isaac ; and Moses when he lifted up the serpent ; and Jonah when he bade them cast him into the sea. All these were but shadows of what was to happen at our Lord's Death : and when that Death came, they were finished : such sacrifices were no more to be repeated : such works, it was now understood, were always in themselves imperfect, and only now had their effect. "It is finished : " the law of bloody sacrifices, and of outward and shadowy blessings, is finished for ever. As therefore it would be very strange and unchristian, should any of us go back to the old Jewish ceremonies and offerings ; so is it, if we go back to the things of this present world and make its blessings our hope and reward, which are but shadows of the true. "It is finished : " the days are over, when eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, might be allowed to take up the better part of a man's thoughts and hopes. Instead of these, we have communion with Christ, the pearl of great price, the graces and works of God's kingdom, the pure delights of those who shall be like unto the Angels, set before us to fill all our hearts. Things temporal, to a member of the Crucified One, are in a manner finished : to him there only remain the things eternal.

Lastly, and perhaps chiefly, we may understand our Redeemer in this remarkable Word, "It is finished," to be expressing a kind of contentment and satisfaction of heart, that now at length the great work is completed, for which He came into the world ; the

battle with the Evil one is fought, and the victory won: the Serpent's head is bruised by the Seed of the woman, the Son of that uncorrupt Mother. The prince of this world having come and tried the Saviour and found nothing in Him, no weak part, no shadow of transgression to lay hold of, is altogether baffled and overcome; and so by His Death He hath destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is the devil." This is the travail or labour of our Saviour's Soul, which He looks back upon, and is satisfied with; and so He cries out, "It is finished:" as He had a little before, in sure foresight of His victory: "^dNow is the judgement of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out:" and again, "^eI have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do: and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

So it was with our Blessed Lord, when He came to the night of death. He had entirely done His day's work; there was no one thing, little or great, which had not been absolutely perfect. And why? Because it had been His meat and drink to do the Will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work. As He began, so He ended. As had been His Baptism, Fasting and Temptation, such were His Agony and Bloody Sweat, His Cross and Passion, His precious Death and Burial. Why are we, His members, so unlike Him? Why are we so wonderfully unwilling to keep on with good works, so apt to fall back and amuse ourselves with looking at our mere good beginnings, so fond of finding others a little less forward

^c Heb. ii. 14.

^d S. John xii. 31.

^e Ib. xvii. 4, 5.

than ourselves, so determined that we will not at any rate go beyond such and such a stage of exact obedience to God's Will, so positive and scornful of good advice, when it seems to us stricter than it need be? Alas! no account can be given of all this, except that we choose to have it so. Truly if such as we are saved, we must fear it can only be so as by fire. But why should we remain such? It is not too late, by God's mercy, to fix a steadier eye on the Cross, now again lifted up in our sight, and to lay a firmer hold on it. It is not too late to pray and strive for some little portion of the spirit of S. Paul. He ordered his Christian life by this rule, to forget the things behind and to reach forward to the things before: i.e., to try to do every thing better than the last thing was done. And this was his reward. On the point of death the Spirit of God taught him to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Think, my brethren, of the comfort and refreshment of but one day, one hour, I will not say thoroughly well spent, but spent in sincere endeavours to do our best, in the government of the temper as well as in outward actions: and think what joy and peace, to have to look back on a whole life spent in the same way: to have God whispering to our conscience, "It is finished," and so to bow our head, and willingly give up the ghost.

† 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

SERMON XXIX.

STEPS IN THE PASSION.

PREPARING FOR THE CROSS.

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

WE cannot think worthily of our Lord's sufferings, and on many accounts we might well think it most religious to hide our eyes, and wonder at them in silence. But Holy Scripture invites us to turn our minds that way: the Church encourages us, setting forth one by one the minute and particular descriptions of Scripture: and if we have any the least touch of grateful love towards Him, how can we go on with our own pleasures and profits, just as if it were nothing to us, while He is every hour agonizing more and more, His Body torn and His Heart broken for our sakes? Humbly therefore, and with deep confusion of heart, that we are unworthy so much as to look towards Him, let us try, during these six days, to follow our Divine Saviour, in thought and memory, along some part of the rough road, which He travelled for our sake. And because the time allows not of our going through all, let us begin from the point when the sentence of His cruel enemies went forth decidedly against Him; when the word, "Crucify Him," began to be heard among the cries of His enemies, who surrounded Pilate's judgement-seat.

From that moment forward what happened to our Blessed Lord seems like a more immediate and direct preparation for the Cross. At that moment therefore I shall now begin, as you heard in the catechising to consider His history. To-day we consider how He prepared Himself for the Cross, and to-morrow we shall try to consider how He bare it. And so on through the remaining days of the Holy Week, until we come to His leaving the Cross again, and lying down for a short while in the grave.

Now the first moment, I believe, in which the Cross began to be mentioned among those, who were so cruelly hunting our meek Lord to the death, was, when Pilate was urging them to take Him rather than Barabbas for the malefactor to be released according to the custom of the Passover. Pilate was sure our Lord was innocent, and very much disliked and dreaded having any hand in His death: but withal he was too selfish, too worldly, too cowardly, to release Him at once, come what would of it. He therefore cast about for ways to save the Holy Jesus without affronting them: and it came into his mind, that they had a right by custom to choose one out to be forgiven, among the malefactors who chanced to be in prison at the time of the Passover: according to the quality of that feast, which being in remembrance of a great deliverance, brought with it naturally deliverance of every kind. He offered them accordingly their choice, which they would have, "This man or Barabbas:" now Barabbas was a robber: and a robber of no common sort, for he was also a rebel and a murderer. Pilate therefore hoped that it would seem to them too bad to choose him, and that in this way he

might be allowed to spare our Lord. But his wavering, as the manner is, did but make them the more savage. They, moved by the Chief Priests, cried out, "Not this man, but Barabbas." And when Pilate, willing in every way to make them consider what they were doing, went on to ask, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" they all cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him;" "let Him be crucified." And this, I believe, is the first mention of the Cross in the actual history of our Lord's Passion: and thenceforth all that He suffers may be considered, as I said, as more immediately and directly preparing Him for the Cross: like garnishing and dressing and preparing a Lamb for the sacrifice. And all the while it was so wonderfully ordered, that each of the affronts and spiteful cruelties, which those hardhearted men offered Him, was in figure and mystery, they little thinking of it, an acknowledgment of some part of His glory, as well as an instruction to us, how to enter into His sufferings and receive the benefit of them.

Thus, whereas Pilate, on hearing those savage cries, gave Him up to the soldiers, according to the custom of the Romans, to be scourged before He was crucified, and the first thing they did was to strip Him, every one may know, without being told, what a severe and dreadful beginning of punishment this was to His pure and sacred Soul and Body: and every one, when he is told, can understand how the shame of our first parents at their nakedness, the first effect of God's anger at their sin, was laid upon Him Who was to bear their sin and ours. And we may understand too, how the memory of this may

render sinners patient under the many trials which their natural shame exposes them to in life, and in the shame of confessing, if need be, their secret sins.

When our Lord was stripped, they bound Him (as is supposed,) to a stone pillar which was in the hall of judgement, and which, we are told, was still to be seen three hundred years afterwards, and began to scourge Him on the Back with their cruel whips, every stroke of which would fetch blood, especially if (as was often the case) they had loaded the whips with lead, or with some other heavy substance. And thus His Sacred Blood begins to be poured out; that Blood, one Drop of which is more precious than all the treasures of the whole world; and He becomes, as the Prophets foretold He should be, “^ared in” His “apparel, and” His “garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat.” Thus, when they least thought of it, they did in a manner bear witness to His glory and their own condemnation. For that Blood was the instrument of His Triumph; it was by that He won the victory over His enemies, and among the rest over themselves. If they did not repent, it was a token how He one day “^bwill tread them in” His “anger and trample them in” His “fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon” His “garments, and” He “will stain all” His “raiment.” And again, it was the token of our healing and of their’s too, if they were penitent, “For the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His Stripes,” say the Prophet and the Apostle ^c, “we are healed.” We are healed, if we are partakers of those Stripes, but we cannot be partakers of them, except God graciously apply them

^a Is. lxiii. 2.^b Ib. 3.^c Ib. liii. 5. 1 S. Pet. ii. 24.

to us; and God's way of applying them to us is by touching our hearts with such true penitence, that we gladly take whatever scourges are laid on us for our sins; that we punish and chasten ourselves for our own faults, and are ashamed to lead lives of ease and enjoyment, and to have our own way, while our Lord is stripped and bound, and^d giving His Back to the smiters, and His Cheeks to them that pluck off the hair. This is the way to be healed by His Stripes: God give us grace to take it.

Having stripped and scourged Him, they proceed to dress Him again; but instead of His own garments, they first put on Him a purple or scarlet robe, with a reed in His right Hand, which He meekly takes; and a Crown plaited of Thorns, and put on His Head. This they do in mockery, as to one who calls Himself a king, and they also "bow the knee before Him," and say in derision, Hail, King of the Jews? He bore it all, because we are so proud and haughty, so lifted up, some with our apparel, some with our bodily strength, or power to manage others, some with our place in the world and the respect our brethren pay: we are proud; and He would make atonement for our pride. He bore it all: for in truth all of it was, in shadow and mystery and in ways they little dreamed of, giving Him that Glory which of right was His, and no man's else. That robe is the token of His Royalty, to Whom "all power is given in heaven and in earth^e:" that reed will turn in His Hand into "a Rod of iron," wherewith "He will bruise" His enemies, the wicked kings and nations of the earth: that Crown is but the first of many

^d Is. l. 6.

^e S. Matt. xxviii. 18.

Crowns which He will wear, when He cometh to judge the world. And well is it a Crown of Thorns, to point Him out as the King of Martyrs and sufferers, a King Whose eminence it is to have sorrow, such as the whole world never saw the like. By wearing those Thorns, He takes on Himself the curse laid on our first father, that where he looked for good fruit, he should find none but thorns and thistles. And He speaks to the heart of all His servants, those especially who are entrusted with any sort of power over others, to help them to bear patiently the cumberance and the burthen and the strife: to endure meekly for His sake the insolence of those set under them, as well as the tyranny and unkindness of their oppressors.

But see, they are tired of their mock reverence: they spit upon Him, and take the reed, and smite Him on the Head: they spit upon Him; that is sinful man's return for His mercy, of Whom we read a little before, "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay," and restored him to sight. They spit upon Him: and we know how very provoking that sort of insolence is to our unchastened nature: worse to bear, to most persons, than very many things which are more hurtful than it. And it so far added to our Blessed Lord's suffering, that He counted it worth mentioning in His prophetic warnings, along with scourging and putting to death. Now, my brethren, it is seldom, you know, that God tries us by the greater calamities of life: but even from our childhood up, and perhaps in our childhood, as much

^f S. John ix. 6.

as at any time, we meet often with what seems to us very provoking, insolent behaviour. I beseech you, when such things happen, let us remember this meek Saviour, how He "hid not His Face from shame and spitting." For our sake He bare it, that we might be forgiven our many proud and passionate words, our great impatience of ill-treatment and mockery, especially from those whom we have befriended. Let us remember Him, and if we have not the grace to be really thankful for such ill-usage,—many saints have been so before now, hoping thereby to be made more like our Saviour,—at least let us learn to bear it patiently, and requite it with good instead of evil.

Pilate now, seeing our Lord in this sad condition, and more and more inwardly moved by the tokens of Majesty which he discerned through all His humiliations, makes two more last trials to get Him spared. He brings Him forth twice, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, and says to the people, "Behold the Man," "Behold your King:" as if he should say, "Surely now you have had enough of His Blood: surely you will let Him go, now you see Him in this piteous condition." Even here again, little as he knew it, his words were full of deep mysteries, and tended more and more to our Lord's Glory. "Behold *the Man*:" "Behold the Son of Man! Behold Him, Who is born into the world, in order to gather in one and bear alone the burthen of the sin and misery of all men that ever were: behold the Second Adam, appearing as a criminal, in the shame and pain which was due to the first!" And again, "Behold your King! behold Him, Who is indeed King of the Jews and of all God's people, wearing the

marks of that suffering and sacrifice, on which His kingdom depends: preparing to humble Himself to death, even the death of the Cross, that God may afterwards highly exalt Him, and give Him a Name which is above every Name." Thus Pontius Pilate unknowingly preaches the Gospel, saying, "Behold the Man," and, "Behold your King."

In vain, however, did he hope to move their hard hearts: their hearts which were no doubt hardened by the Evil spirit, himself ignorant that in crucifying the Lord of Glory, he was but working the destruction of his own power. They see Christ in His sad state, but they pity Him not: they do but cry out the more furiously, "away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." And when Pilate, now, as it seems, giving up the point in despair, says to them, in the manner of one taunting, "Shall I crucify your King?" they answer stubbornly, "we have no king but Cæsar." They had before shewn their scorn and hatred of our Lord, in preferring Barabbas to Him: now they shew what they love and honour, deliberately choosing Cæsar instead of Christ; this world instead of the kingdom of Heaven. And they are taken at their word. Christ is given up to them to be crucified: and now it is no more *preparation* for the Cross, but the Cross itself is brought and laid upon Him: and He enters on another stage of His mournful way to death.

"His Blood be on us and on our children:" that was the curse which those enemies of Christ then pronounced against themselves, in order to overcome Pilate's scruples: and fearfully did it come soon after on the head of that nation. But to us, and to them

too, if they were penitent, the same words are a deep and mysterious prayer for His pardoning, sanctifying, saving grace. What can we wish or pray better for ourselves and our children, than that His Blood, once sprinkled on us in Holy Baptism, may abide upon us for ever? And it will abide, if we do our best to enter into the spirit of His Passion: not only confessing and trusting in it, but remembering it wherever we go, and chastening and denying ourselves for its sake.

SERMON XXX.

STEPS IN THE PASSION.

BEARING THE CROSS.

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

WE have considered that part of our Lord's Sufferings, which may be called Preparation for the Cross, and now we come to His taking it up and bearing it.

When Pilate's heathen soldiers had done mocking Him, they took off from Him the purple robe, in which they had arrayed Him in scorn of His title as King, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. He would suffer in His own Person, though it were for our sins. He permits them to put His own raiment again upon Him, and so it becomes more evident to men and angels, Who suffers. He will have His own robes again, that He may put them off when He is to be nailed to the Cross, and so to the very eyes of His creatures the Mighty God may shew, how He empties Himself of His Glory, and takes on Him the form of a servant for us. It is like His laying aside His garments, and girding Himself, when He washed His disciples' feet; only that this is a yet lower degree of humiliation.

And now they bring the Cross, and lay it upon

Him. What was the Cross? It was two beams of wood, fastened together in that well-known shape: that very shape and material, which had been marked out of old in so many types and prophecies, as the instrument of good to mankind. Moses had represented its shape, when he held up his hands on the mount, and won the victory for Joshua and all Israel, who were fighting below against the Amalekites. As long as he held up his hands in the form of a cross, and so prayed, Israel prevailed; but when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed. Thus Moses represented the shape of the Cross; and as to its material, that is, wood, it was signified by the Ark of Noah, by the tree cast into the bitter waters, by Moses' rod, by David's staff, by the Tree of Life in the midst of Paradise: that as death and ruin came into the world by eating of the forbidden tree, so life and healing should come, in God's good time, by our partaking of this other tree, on which He hangs, Who is the fruit of everlasting Life.

This Cross, so formed, was brought where our Lord was; and when, having done mocking Him, they took Him and led Him away, He had to bear its heavy, galling weight to the place of execution; it being the custom of the Romans, that every condemned malefactor should bear his own cross. Now He was, of course, weary and exceeding faint: for He had had no refreshment since about six o'clock in the Thursday evening, it being now near twelve on the Friday morning: and all the night He had no rest; for at first He prayed, and was in that deep agony, His Sweat, as it were great drops of Blood falling down to the ground; then He was seized and dragged

to the High Priest's palace, then to Pilate's, then Herod's, then back again to Pilate's and in all places vexed and tormented, and not allowed any rest. And besides He could not but have lost great quantities of blood by His scourging, and by the wounds of His thorny crown, forced into His Sacred Head by their blows and buffetings, when they took the Reed and smote Him on the Head. In this weak state, He seems to have sunk down under the Cross, and those rude soldiers, instead of supporting Him themselves, lay hold of the first person they happen to meet coming into the city, and compel him to assist in bearing the Cross. That person happened to be one Simon, a Jew, whose home was at a distance, but who then coming out of the country, was engaged, when he little thought of it himself, in this sacred and mournful task, of helping our Lord to bear His Cross. From the manner in which S. Mark mentions him, as the father of Alexander and Rufus, who seem to have been well-known Christians, we may gather that Simon himself was afterwards a Christian: and if so, what an awful, yet joyful thought for him, when he became aware, on Whom he had waited, Whom he had been called to aid in such sore distress. How thankful must he have been to God's good providence, to Christ's distinguishing favour, which ordained that he should be there just at that moment of time, and so had the privilege of suffering some little pain and inconvenience for Christ Who was bearing all for him and for us.

Methinks in this circumstance of Simon's meeting them, and being compelled to bear part of the Cross, we may see encouragement for those many persons,

who fall, when they least think of it, into evil and sad accidents; to whom the cross, one may say, comes quite beside expectation: who are lamed, for instance, by sudden blows or falls, or reduced to want by fires or shipwrecks, or any sad, unforeseen event. Such persons are especially tempted to impatience and a bitter kind of regret afterwards. Satan, if he can, will persuade them to spend their lives in brooding over their calamity, and thinking, "If this or that care had been taken, we should not have been in this helpless condition." And so they lose much of the fruit, which God intended them by their trial. Would it not be better if they would say to themselves, "I am but like Simon the Cyrenian, on whom part of the Cross was laid without his thinking of it: I am *like* him, honoured with a little, a very little, touch and taste of the sufferings of Jesus Christ: let me not, by murmuring, throw away my share in so great a blessing: let me, by faith and patience, improve this affliction, which seemed to come by accident, as a mean of drawing nearer to Christ: who knows but it may turn, through God's infinite mercy, to something not altogether unlike a martyr's crown?"

In any case, certain it is, that if we would have a saving hope in Christ crucified, we must not excuse ourselves from bearing our cross after Christ. He Himself had, long beforehand, drawn men's attention to this part of His sufferings, as setting a pattern for our whole lives. "Whosoever taketh not up his cross, and followeth after Me, cannot be My disciple." You may call yourselves by My Name, but you are not really fit to be Mine; you are Mine only to condemnation, if you do not take up your cross:

i. e. if you are impatient in troubles, or unwilling to deny yourselves in pleasures. This is Christ's own warning. Now hear His Apostle's invitation. "aThe bodies of those beasts," says S. Paul, "whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burned without the camp" of Israel. Such was the rule, while they were in the wilderness: and it was but an example and shadow of our better Sacrifice: for therefore "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His Own Blood, suffered without the gate." He was crucified, as the manner was, without the gates of Jerusalem, on the hill called Calvary, or Golgotha, or the place of a skull, because the bones of condemned malefactors were strewn all around it. It was the place His providence had marked out long before; for thither He had guided Abraham to offer Isaac, and up that same hill Isaac had borne the wood, on which he was to be offered. But now the Lord chooses it, because it is the saddest and most shameful place He can suffer in, and therefore fittest for Him, Who was resolved to bear all the sadness and shame we had deserved. As He would have two thieves led with Him to be put to death, that He might be more entirely "numbered with the transgressors," so He would be crucified on Calvary, because that was the place of transgressors.

Yet is He not quite entirely without some one to pity Him, now that His grievous death appeared so near at hand. He Who accepted no other consolation, did not refuse the wailing and lamentation of the daughters of Jerusalem: only He told them, that they should rather weep for themselves and their

^a Heb. xiii. 11.

children. He told them of the days, which Moses had long ago foretold, when they should eat the flesh of their sons and of their daughters, because of the terrible famine which the siege would cause. And He added this serious warning for them and for us all: “^b If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” As if He had said, “^c If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” If the Lamb of God, to take away sin, endure such manifold and grievous agonies, what must those look for, who persist in sin, reject the Saviour, despise the Cross?

O extreme charity! that in His own great affliction He should still go on leaving no word unsaid, which might do us good! us, who were the miserable causes of it all. O folly and madness no less extreme, if we refuse to hear His warning, to accept His gracious call, Come unto Me, take My yoke, My Cross, upon you, I will make it easy and light: it is bitter to flesh and blood, but I will make it rest unto your souls! O base ingratitude, still to linger, as it were, in Jerusalem, in the wicked world, among His murderers, when we might at least mourn with the women, and bear a little of His Cross with Simon, and shew ourselves not quite ignorant that we have a Saviour!

^b S. Luke xxiii. 31.

^c 1 S. Peter iv. 18.

SERMON XXXI.

STEPS IN THE PASSION.

FASTENING TO THE CROSS.

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

THE third step or degree in the Passion of our Blessed Redeemer, is the actual fastening of Him to the Cross. Of this something must be said to-day, said here in His own especial Presence: and may He pardon our great unworthiness, and not permit us to say any thing wrong!

The Blessed Jesus had laboured up the hill, bearing His Cross, though in part assisted by Simon, as Isaac, so many hundred years before, had ascended the same hill, bearing the wood of his sacrifice: and, like Isaac, He is now to be bound and laid upon the Altar: for the Cross in respect of Him is an Altar, on which He will offer Himself up for our sins. Like Isaac, He will permit Himself to be bound and laid upon the Altar; but He will not, like Isaac, rise up from it unhurt, with his bands loosed, and sacrificed only in figure. Our Lord will not so spare Himself; He will go on and tread the wine-press alone: He will leave no part of His awful Sacrifice unaccomplished.

Accordingly, having now come to the very place,

which was also, according to a tradition among some of the ancients, the place where our first father Adam was buried; the Lord of Glory permitted His un-pitying enemies a second time to strip Him of His garments: expiating, by that voluntary shame of His, our many grievous transgressions against natural modesty and decency.

Then they offered Him vinegar and gall, or wine mingled with myrrh: a nauseous and bitter draught, meant perhaps to insult instead of refreshing Him. He tasted it, thereby atoning for our manifold wilful faults in this matter of taste: our greediness, our selfishness, our vain-longing after delicacies, and discontent with what God had provided for us. In many such ways, not a few of us go on sinning from our youth up. Can we do less than be ashamed and sorry for such sins, and resolve to please ourselves less in future, when we read of those blessed Lips tasting vinegar and gall for our sake? Or if the wine mingled with myrrh were, as some think, a draught prepared in friendship, to deaden our Lord's sense of pain, and He would not drink it, because He would bear the full bitterness of all that was laid upon Him: surely this may be a great help and support to those, whom God's providence calls on to bear sharp bodily pains. They will bear without shrinking back that which, after all, can be but a very little of what His blessed Body had to endure, and He would not deaden in Himself the full feeling of it.

Then they bring Him to the Cross, which lay for that purpose on the ground, and lay His blessed Limbs upon it, as a lamb without spot or blemish is laid on the Altar of sacrifice. He stretches out His Arms,

those everlasting Arms which embrace heaven and earth, those Arms, in which, like the Good Shepherd His delight had been to take up little children and bless them. He stretches them out, and they rudely seize them, and nail them one by one to the arms of the Cross. Solomon said long ago of Him, speaking of Him as the Wisdom of God, ^aLength of days is in His right Hand, and in His left Hand riches and honour. Length of days, a happy Eternity, is in that right Hand which is now nailed to the Cross, that He may give it to whom He will; and He will give it to those who do not reject His mercy: and in His left Hand, which is also nailed on the other side, are riches and honour. All the glories and treasures of this world and of the world of Angels are the property of this adorable Sufferer: but for the present He hides His glory: *He* dies, Who is Lord of Eternal Life; *He* hangs naked by His Wounds from the shameful Cross, Who is King of kings, and Maker both of rich and poor. And shall we dare complain, for ourselves or those dear to us, of the want of riches, credit or long life?

But again, how had those sacred Hands and Feet ever been employed to the very last moment that they could move? His Feet had gone about doing good; His Hands had been stretched out to heal, and cleanse, and bless: the slightest touch of them had been cleansing to the leper, sight to the blind, recovery to the sick, life to the dead: the last use that we read of His applying them to was, when the too eager S. Peter had smitten off the ear of a servant of the High Priest, and Jesus, meekly asking His per-

^a Prov. iii. 16.

secutors to let Him so far have the use of His hands, touched the man's ear and healed him: even as the last voluntary use He had made of His Feet was to rise from prayer, and come where His disciples were sleeping for sorrow, and warn them to watch and pray. But now both Hands and Feet are riveted, with most cruel pains, to the accursed Tree: yet let not those cruel men think that they have taken away His power to heal and to save: nay, those Hands in that posture are the very healing and salvation of the whole world: so stretched out, they are stretched out for ever; stretched out to a disobedient and gainsaying people, to you, to me, to all sinners of all ages and nations, ready to receive and embrace us, if we on our part will come near and continue under the shadow of that saving Cross: if we too stretch out our arms, give ourselves up unreservedly to Him.

Along with this action of stretching out His Arms for the salvation of all, even of the disobedient, came words of sweet and awful meaning, the last Prayer of Jesus Christ: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The words and the action go together, even as in His blessed Sacraments. He prays the Father to forgive them, and He extends His Arms on the Cross to purchase them forgiveness. And shall not we too forgive men their trespasses, when we see our Father in Heaven parting with His Only-Begotten Son, that He may forgive our trespasses? Shall we think much of such little wrongs and insults, as our neighbours and brethren here may seem to put upon us, while He is having the cruel nails forced through His Hands and Feet, and all the notice He takes of it is to say, "Father, forgive

them?" Alas, I beseech you, let it be so no longer. Now in this Holy Week, this week of deliverance, let us make haste and put out of our minds all bitter thoughts, all unbrotherly dislike of any one, be he who he may, against whom we think we have ground of complaint. Let our Lord in this respect see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; that He, looking into our hearts, when we get up on Easter-Day morning, may discern us to be really ashamed and sorry for any hard, unkind, contemptuous thoughts, which we have had towards any one whatever: much more for spiteful words, or any sort of unforgiving actions. For the love of Christ, let us, once for all, part with all bitter remembrances of one another's conduct. No doubt we may have abundance to forget and forgive in others, and others, probably, no less in us: let us *really* forget and forgive, for Christ's sake, and for His dying prayer's sake.

And let that prayer be a warning to us, how much more there may be, nay surely is, in all our behaviour, good and bad, than we think for at the time. "They know not what they do," said the Merciful Jesus: they think they are only insulting an ordinary malefactor, while indeed they are crucifying the Lord of Glory. It will be good for us to take up the word, and say to ourselves, we know not what we shall be doing, if we give way to this or that temptation. Our souls and bodies are members of Christ, made such by Holy Baptism, and we know not what we do, how near the very Throne of God we bring our defilements, if we stain those souls and bodies by deliberate sin. And again, for our comfort, He permits us to take up the same word in respect of our

poor weak endeavours to obey Him also: as if He had said, "Father, bless these Thy faithful servants, for they, too, knew not what they did; they thought they were only helping a poor brother, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, when indeed they were feeding and clothing Me; they thought they were but hearing the Church, and indeed they were hearing Me; they thought but of giving a cup of cold water to one of My little ones, and they were refreshing Me in My feverish consuming thirst on My Cross. Let them in no wise lose their reward." Thus our Saviour preaches to us, and prays for us, even from His Cross. Of His great mercy may He touch our hearts more and more, that His Preaching and Prayer, His Wounds, may not prove vain to us!

SERMON XXXII.

STEPS IN THE PASSION.

LIFTED UP ON THE CROSS.

THURSDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

THE fourth stage or degree of the Sacrifice on the Cross was the lifting up of the Adorable Body of Jesus, hanging upon His Wounds, in the sight of men and angels, between two thieves. The nails had been driven, the gall and vinegar tasted, the prayer said for pardon on His cruel enemies and on us who are His enemies no less, so often as we crucify Him anew by our sins. And now the altar, with the Precious Victim on it, is to be lifted up between earth and heaven, to complete the Sacrifice by fresh suffering both in His Sacred Body and in His Divine Soul, and also, in a wonderful way, to cause the fruits of that Sacrifice to appear immediately.

The lifting up of the Cross must have caused our Lord fresh bodily pain, and that most severe and tormenting, as any one may at once understand. For now the whole weight of His sacred Body was supported upon His very Wounds, and every little unintentional movement, such as can hardly be avoided when people do but fetch their breath, must have caused those wounds to rankle, and have been like new nails driven into the tenderest parts. And whereas He had said long ago, "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head," that saying is now fulfilled

in Him more exactly than ever. His glorious and adorable Head, still (it is believed) crowned with thorns, and drooping with such a burthen of sufferings, has no place to rest itself for a moment, except against the cold hard Cross. A thought, which may well help us to bear our own uneasy postures, in pain and sickness, and which may also make us ashamed of studying our own ease and comfort so much as we are apt to do in our health and leisure.

But the lifting up of the Cross led also to intenser agonies in the Soul of our suffering Lord. It was setting Him on high for a mark to the scoffings and reproaches of His enemies. All the scorn and mockery and derision, which bad men in sight and evil angels out of sight were banded together to heap upon Him, now came round Him more unsparingly than ever. Close to Him were the rude and brutish soldiers, the actors in His torture, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar, and saying, If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself. They knew, it is likely, very little about our Saviour; but they saw His Title on the Cross, written in their own language, the Latin, and by that they mocked Him. Farther off were the Chief Priests and Scribes, who, remembering that our Lord before Caiaphas had confessed Himself the Son of God, now mocked Him by that Name: "Let Christ, the Son of God, descend now from the Cross, that we may see and believe." Still further were the passers by, reviling Him and wagging their heads, and taunting Him with the saying which had been so maliciously brought forward at His trial: "Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself and come

down from the Cross." And what seems the depth of all indignity, the very thieves which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth. So that whichever way He cast His eyes, He seemed, for the first minutes at least, during which He hung on the Cross, to meet with no mercy, no compassion on any side. He was, then more than ever, in a condition to take up the words of the Prophet; "a Thy rebuke hath broken my heart; I am full of heaviness: I looked for some to have pity on me, but there was no man; neither found I any to comfort me." When we are most forlorn and desolate, when we seem most forsaken of God and man, then is the time for us to think of our Lord on the Cross, with none but revilers around Him, and to bear our burthen contentedly for His sake.

Yet was not that shame of His without a great and mysterious glory. The very lifting up of the Cross, in which bad men, and doubtless bad angels too, rejoiced at the time as in a sure triumph, was turned to be their defeat and confusion. For indeed this was the very moment which our Lord in clear sight, and His Saints in dim hope, had ever looked forward to. Of this He had warned Nicodemus. "b As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life." This He had on sundry occasions foretold, both to friends and enemies. "c When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He." And again, "d I, if I be lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men unto Me." Christ nailed

a Ps. lxi. 21. b S. John iii. 14, 15. c Ib. viii. 28. d ib. xii. 32.

to the Cross, and dying on it, makes satisfaction for the sin of the world: Christ lifted up and suffering, in the sight of all God's creation, overcomes the world and subdues it unto Himself: the serpent's head is thenceforth bruised, and they whom the serpent had bitten are healed. And as the first fruits of this great victory, behold, one of the malefactors hanged with Him, who at first had begun to revile Him, is converted, forgiven, and graciously invited to meet Him that very day in Paradise. Such was the fruit of the Cross lifted up. As long as it lay on the ground, this thief saw not our Lord's heavenly patience and meekness. But when it was raised between earth and heaven, and he himself close at its side, then he could not help seeing: and God, Who accepts graciously the least good thing in us, touched him more and more, that he might not only see but believe. Thus the Lord Jesus, being lifted up, began to draw all men unto Him. That penitent thief was the first-fruits of the Jews, who should believe in Christ, and there was another by, who in a certain sense might be called the first-fruits of the Gentiles: the Centurion, who, when he saw how our Lord cried out and gave up the Ghost, said, "eCertainly this was a righteous Man: ftruly this was the Son of God."

Thus was the lifting up of Christ connected with the beginning of sinners' conversion: and another circumstance shewed how much it had to do with the communion and glorification of His Saints. From His Cross, as from a glorious high Throne, He looked down on His Holy Mother and on His beloved disciple, and committed them to one another's care. "gBehold thy Son," and "Behold thy Mother," were

e S. Luke xxiii. 47. f S. Matt. xxvii. 54. g S. John xix. 26, 27.

words spoken from on high ; words fulfilled even now in the Church and kingdom of Jesus Christ, wheresoever Christian people shew due honour to the Mother of their Saviour, cherish and honour her memory, and call her Blessed. They are the words of a dying King, and may help us to judge truly, how the lifting up of the Cross tended to the glory of Him Who hung upon it.

Again, together with the Cross was lifted up the Title which Pilate put upon it : " JESUS of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Pilate set it there partly in derision ; yet was it, whether he would or no, a witness, to all who saw the Cross, of the true dignity of Jesus Christ. Therefore the chief Priests objected to it ; they knew it was in mockery, yet somehow it made them uneasy. And Pilate himself, not knowing why, refused to alter what he had written. And it was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin, that all the world might witness the dignity of Jesus : both the Jews, God's own people, whose language was Hebrew, and the Greeks, the wisest and most knowing of all the nations of the world, and the Romans, the most active and powerful, whose language was Latin.

But the lifting up of the Cross displayed Christ's glory not only to the children of men, but also to the invisible Powers, the good and bad Angels. All God's creation felt the blow, when God shewed Himself to them submitting to the agonies of shame and death. From the sixth hour, when the Cross was lifted up, or very soon after it, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. Christ the Light of men, the Light of the world, of Whom the sun in heaven is but a shadow, He was passing

through the valley of the shadow of death; and no wonder if this outward sun, the faint image of His brightness, suffered eclipse: no wonder, if it were for a time miraculously darkened at noon-day, when it would otherwise have been brightest. Nor can any man say, what terror that darkness might strike into the invisible powers of darkness, and into him who is the prince of darkness and "the ruler of the darkness of this world." He had been urging on the Jews to destroy our Saviour, had entered into Judas for that very purpose, and now, too late, he finds out that he has been working against himself, bringing on the world's Redeemer those sufferings, which will end, according to the prophecy, in the bruising of his own head.

Thus have we seen the glorious yet mournful lifting up of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross. Never was king so high upon his throne: never was malefactor so bitterly punished on the fatal and accursed tree. As for ourselves, our duty and our wisdom, our debt to Him, in all love and obedience, is plain.

For this cause, O Lord, wast Thou lifted up, that Thou mightest draw all men unto Thee. Grant us, with overflowing love, to yield ourselves to Thy gracious purpose. Draw us, that we may run after Thee. Say to us, "Lift up your hearts," and give us grace to mean what we say, in answering, that "we lift them up unto the Lord." Morning, noon and night, may we lift up our hearts unto Thee, adoring Thee as our King, but remembering that Thy Crown is of thorns: and that as Christ Himself, so we that are Christ's, must first suffer such and such things, and then enter into His glory.

SERMON XXXIII.

CLOSE OF THE PASSION.

DYING AND DEAD UPON THE CROSS.

GOOD FRIDAY.

TO-DAY, and especially this afternoon, we are invited by the Church to consider our Blessed Lord as dying and dead upon His Cross: not only preparing Himself for it, not only bearing it up the hill of suffering, not only nailed to it, not only lifted up on it, but actually breathing His last and hanging there dead. After it was lifted up, and our Lord had comforted those whom He saw needing comfort, His Blessed Mother and the Penitent Thief by His side, then, it would seem, the darkness came suddenly on. It came on about the sixth hour, and continued until the ninth, i.e., it lasted from noon till three in the afternoon: for which reason, among others, those two hours have been ever kept by God's servants and by His Church as Hours of prayer: Noon, because then our Lord was lifted up on the Cross; Three in the afternoon, because then He gave up the Ghost.

For those Three hours there was darkness, and for the most part, we may believe, there was silence also round the Cross; and strange and awful must the thoughts have been of all those, whether friends or enemies to Christ, who had to wait there in that

silence and darkness. Surely if their hearts were not utterly hardened, it must have helped them to call their sins to remembrance : surely the thought of it may help us to do the same. Surely it may do us good, in our dark and silent hours, to remember that most awful part of the most awful day that ever rose and set on this earth : with sad thoughts of our sins, and adoring love of Him Who is enduring so much for them, that the very excess of His pangs makes a mystery, and wraps Him away from our sight in a still cloud. If we so sit in darkness, He will be a Light unto us.

But suppose the ninth hour now close at hand, and listen : for you will presently hear that silence broken ; the Son of God, now on the point of death, will cry out twice with a loud voice ; and wonderful indeed will be the effects of that cry, even in the sight of ordinary beholders. He will cry aloud to His Father twice : the first time to expostulate with Him on His great and sore sufferings : “ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ” the second time, as the last effort of exhausted human nature, to yield up His Soul, with a kind of death-struggle, into the hands of Him Who made It. “ Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit.” Those are the cries which suddenly break out from the mysterious Cross through the darkness, and within a very short time of each other : and with the last cry the Divine Soul has departed from the adorable Body, and there are fearful sights and great signs from heaven. There must have been something divine, evidently miraculous, in the very tone of our Lord’s voice, sounding out so powerfully from so weak and exhausted a

frame: for we read that it went deep into the heart of one who was watching by. “^aWhen the centurion which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.” The Cry of our Lord is noticed as the thing which had an especial power to convert him.

And indeed that Cry was heard far and near: heard in the bosom of the earth, for it quaked, and the very rocks rent in sunder, as if to reproach the hard hearts of His enemies. It was heard in God’s Temple, where at that moment the blood of the Jewish Paschal Lamb, which did but foreshadow our Lord, was being offered. Jesus’ loud Cry was heard there, for at that moment the veil of the Temple, the type of the partition between earth and heaven, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. It was heard both in the graves of the dead, and in the unseen world where their souls are waiting for judgement. For “the graves,” S. Matthew tells us, “were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose.” And indeed it is very reasonable, and agreeable to the teaching of the Catholic Church, to suppose that that departing voice of our Lord was heard where the old Patriarchs were; that Abraham Isaac and Jacob then saw His Day, and rejoiced; and that the Evil one, with all his unclean spirits, then felt himself so bruised under the feet of the Seed of the woman, as he had never been before.

So much the Scripture seems to give us to understand concerning that last dying voice of the Son of God: sounding as it did through the darkness. But

^a S. Mark xv. 39.

now that the ninth hour is fully come, and the time of our Lord's sufferings over, the miraculous darkness rolls away, and the sun looks out again on the guilty but now redeemed earth, yet moist with the newly-shed Blood of its Creator. The darkness departs: and what is to be seen? The three Crosses are still there, and the three sufferers hanging on them: but He Who occupies the middle station of the three is no longer a Sufferer. He is dead; His Sacred and Divine Body has on it all the well-known marks of that change, which must pass upon all sinners, and which He would submit to, because in all things but their sin He would make Himself like sinners. His Head, which a little before we may suppose lovingly raised up towards heaven, when He would commend His Spirit to His Father, is now bowed meekly down, as when He gave up the Ghost. Such did He shew Himself to S. John among others, and to S. Mary Magdalene and the other pious women, when they first beheld Him again on the rolling away of the darkness. There can be no doubt of His Death: He shews all the signs of it: but on the two crosses by Him are two who are yet alive; on the one side the Penitent, on the other the blaspheming, thief: both are still lingering in life, but with how different thoughts concerning Jesus, and concerning their own latter end! Both are still living, and, what might not have been expected, both have yet to endure additional pains. For the soldiers, at Pilate's command, come near and examine the condition of the three crucified: and the two whom they find breathing, they cruelly break their legs, so to put an end to their lives: and here we may judge that the Peni-

tent felt a sort of joy in having yet more pain to bear patiently for his Saviour's sake: as did that other penitent long after, who delighted in what he endured for the Church, because it was filling up what was behind in Christ's sufferings in the flesh. S. Paul rejoiced in his sufferings because of their being really but mysteriously united to the sufferings of Christ: so no doubt did this penitent malefactor, and so may we rejoice in ours, if we truly endeavour to make them His by faith and patience, and deep humble confession that we deserve all and worse.

One Mystery yet remains, before the Holy Body can be taken down from the Cross. “^b When they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His Side, and forthwith came there-out Blood and Water.” His legs might not be broken, He being the true Paschal Lamb, of Whom it was prophesied^c, “A Bone of Him shall not be broken.” His Side must be pierced, because the Prophet Zechariah had said, “They,” the wicked ones of this world, especially the Jews, “^d shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced.” But see what a mercy God provides for us by this rude and wanton blow of the soldier: how He turns, as before, all that was done, to our Lord's glory and our salvation. By that Wound, received after His death, the Holy Jesus does, as it were, open His very Heart to us: He invites us to come there and find shelter: and by the Blood and Water which flows out He makes Himself a Saviour to each one of us in particular. For what is that Water, but the Sacramental grace of His Spirit given

^b S. John xix. 33, 34. ^c Ib. 36. See Ex. xii. 46. Ps. xxxiv. 20.

^d Zech. xii. 10.

us first in Holy Baptism, to unite us to Him by a pure and heavenly birth, and quickened and renewed every time we worthily receive Him in Holy Communion? And what is that Blood, but His very own Heart and Life-Blood, washing away our sins at the Font, uniting us to Him more and more at the Altar? For “^e there are three that bear witness” of Christ to the heart and soul of every Christian: the “Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood; and these three agree in one.” This is the record of S. John, the beloved disciple, who saw the Blood and Water flow from our Lord’s Side: and in such measure as we too are faithful disciples, we too shall be enabled to bear witness to the saving power of the two Divine Sacraments.

This was the last of the Mysteries of Good Friday. The taking down from the Cross, which presently ensued, belongs rather to Holy Saturday, and must therefore be considered to-morrow. Let us now, in what remains of our prayers, and after we have returned home, try to keep steadily before our mind’s eye the Image of Him Who thus died on the Cross: to quiet wandering and worldly thoughts; to make us pure, gentle, patient, contented, self-denying. Let us beseech Him to teach us by His Cross the same lesson which He taught His favoured Apostle. Let the love of Christ constrain us to please Him, not ourselves: ^fbecause we thus judge, that if He, being one, died for us all, then are we all dead in Him: and that He died for us all, that we which live should not henceforth live to ourselves, but to Him that died for us, and rose again.

^e 1 S. John v. 8.

^f 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

SERMON XXXIV.

REST AFTER THE PASSION.

CHRIST TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS.

EASTER EVE.

THOUGH our Lord's Passion is over, yet it becomes us, if we will be faithful lovers of Him, still to sit awhile by His Cross, and meditate deeply on all the great things He hath done and suffered there. It is but a cold unkindly thing, when God has taken a dear friend away, to make haste and leave off dwelling on their memory. It is the way of the world, not of the Church, to do so. The cold-hearted selfish world says, "What is the use of mourning over the dead?" But the Church says, "Do not indeed mourn, as do others that have no hope; but yet it is well, you should linger in heart around the death-beds and the resting-places of those whom God has taken, to learn there submission to His will, calm hope, quiet resignation." Much more does it become us, as Christians, now on the morrow of our Lord's Death, to tarry in heart before His Cross, and consider well His Sacred Remains, and what becomes of them. His true lovers are still waiting there; the soldiers indeed are gone, who had been sent by Pilate to ascertain His death, but the women remain with the beloved disciple S. John: they are quite at a loss

what to do, how to honour His Blessed Body aright, but they cannot bear to leave It, and they find a sad pleasure in contemplating It, now that the noisy, un-pitying persecutors are gone, and they are left free to indulge their devout grief.

Who are these women ? It seems to be generally thought, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was one of them. We know that she had been there when our Lord was first lifted up ; for He spoke to her, and recommended her and S. John to one another's care : and whereas it is said, " From that hour that disciple took her to his own home," it may mean, not that she departed with him immediately, but that she thenceforth accounted herself, widowed as she was, to have no home on earth but his house. Most likely then she was still by the Cross, even in her Son's last agony, and now she is waiting to see what becomes of His dead Body.

And with her is S. Mary Magdalene, out of whom had gone seven devils ; she who was afterwards earliest at her Lord's grave, for she well knew she could never love Him enough for the great things He had done for her. Her love, which was " stronger than death," would not let her depart from the Cross. And there was the other Mary, the wife of Cleopas and sister of the Blessed Virgin, she was also constant in her waiting on Him, both for the Virgin's sake, and for our Lord's own sake, to Whom she stood in so near a relation. And there was Salome, the mother of S. James and S. John, in whose house the holy Virgin was presently to be lodged : she might now see with her eyes what sort of advancement she had been asking for her two sons, in saying,

“Grant that they may sit, the one on Thy right Hand, and the other on Thy left:” she might see that it was only asking for them the first place in pain and martyrdom. There were also other women, countrywomen of His own, for they followed Him from Galilee; and deeply devoted to Him, for they had been ministering to Him of their substance. And besides all these women was the disciple whom Jesus loved. Where else *should* he be in so trying a time, but where our Saviour and His holy Mother are? These then are watching and sorrowing before the Cross, and wondering, in all likelihood, what might be done, to bury Him with due honour and respect: when they see others coming near from the city, who prove to be Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus, bearing, the one linen clothes, the other a hundred pounds weight of spices, to honour the Sacred Body withal, when they shall have taken It down. For Joseph, who had hitherto been Christ’s disciple secretly, for fear of the Jews, now borrows courage, as the Apostles did afterwards, from his Master’s Cross. When all the world was forsaking Christ, he went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the Body of Jesus. And Pilate, wondering to find Christ already dead, was providentially moved to let Joseph have It. Joseph therefore and Nicodemus proceed, with all reverence and affection, in sight of the holy women, and perhaps by their help, to take down Christ from the Cross. And we may well imagine, and draw a picture in our minds, how tenderly they set about their sad but most honourable task, and what grief there was among the holy women, when they had the Body of their Lord on the ground again,

and within their reach. But they may not lament very long, for the Sabbath is fast drawing on, and they will not put aside God's commandment for any grief of their own. Joseph therefore brings his fine linen, spreads it, wraps our Lord decently in it, assisted of course all the while by the Magdalene and the rest, and doubtless by the Holy Mother too, if her grief permit: and Nicodemus brings his spices, his myrrh and aloes, which are wound in the sheet with the Blessed Body. Nicodemus, as well as Joseph, had been timid, but now he serves Christ openly; so mighty was the Cross growing, to attract men to it from every side!

Now in the place where He was crucified was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb belonging to Joseph, hewn out of a rock, wherein never man before was laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, not having time or means to take Him to any further distance, and the Sabbath drawing fast on. Then Joseph rolled a great stone to the door of the Sepulchre, and departed. And the women they also departed, to procure spices and ointments wherewith, by and by, to do more honour to the Sacred Body: and having done so, they rested the Sabbath-day according to the commandment. So began the quiet of that holy Saturday, that chosen and foretold day of rest, to which the Almighty had had an eye from the beginning of the world: with a view to which He had rested from all His works, and had commanded His people to keep every seventh day holy. Christians do well to keep it by earnest meditation on the holy and divine persons, who were now employed in keeping it in their several ways. Behold first the Holy

Family, not that first one which consisted of Mary and Joseph and the Blessed Jesus, but Christ's new Holy Family such as He had appointed it on the Cross; S. John and the Blessed Virgin Mary with her sister, and Salome the mother of S. John. We may imagine their tears over yesterday, their earnest longings for to-morrow; and in the case of S. Peter and the rest of the Apostles we may imagine also what tears of repentance, for their denial and forsaking Him, must have mingled with their thoughts during the whole of that Sabbath. But chiefly are we invited this day to enter into the side of the rock, and contemplate the Body of the Blessed Jesus Himself: how quietly now, and in what Divine Peace, He sleeps in that narrow bed. It is good for us to be there in thought, to be thoroughly aware that our inexcusable sins have brought Him, our best friend, our God and Saviour, into that place of darkness. Let us at least rest from our sins, while He rests there from suffering for us. His Wounds we cannot now see, they are wrapt in the clean linen cloth; neither may we behold His glorious and so lately agonized Features, for the napkin is about His Head, disposed there by the adoring and affectionate hands of His Mother and the other holy women. Let us then contemplate His Grave-clothes, how white and clean they are; in death He wears that fine linen, the token of the Righteousness which He will give to His saints. And with them are wound sweet spices, the sign and pattern of that precious ointment and fragrant savour of good works, which goes down with His holy and faithful members, with all good Christians, to the grave, and embalms their memories, and makes them precious.

Consider these holy grave-clothes of Christ, by which His Saving Wounds are so carefully enwrapt; and let all Christians, especially all whom He calls to suffer, understand thereby, that mere suffering will not save them. The poor, the sick, the afflicted, are sometimes tempted to think, that merely because they are poor, sick and afflicted, great allowance will be made for them, and they need not be so particular in their repentance and amendment. Nay, my brethren; but to be really buried with Christ, you must not only be marked with His wounds, but wear His grave-clothes also. The white robe, which He put on you in Baptism, must abide with you through life, and be your winding-sheet in death. Remain now with Him in His Grave: come not out this night from your serious meditation and remembrance of Christ crucified and buried, until you have, by His grace, renewed your baptismal vows; until, kneeling by His dead Body, you have pledged yourself to spend all the rest of your life in keeping your baptismal robe, which is also to be your funeral robe, clean, so far as it is yet clean, and in washing it with the tears of repentance and the Blood of the Cross, whereinsoever it is unhappily defiled. Make this vow with all your heart, and keep it; for by His grace you may keep it, if you will. So, when the eternal Easter shall come, you will receive the same garments new and glorious, shining, exceeding white as snow, such as no fuller on earth can white them, to be worn for ever in the Presence of Jesus Risen.

SERMON XXXV.

THE CROSS A REMEDY FOR THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

FOR PRIDE.

PALM SUNDAY.

ISA. I. 6.

“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair : I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”

THE holy and awful week is now begun : that one of all the weeks of the year, which is in a peculiar way overshadowed by the Cross of Christ. From the early morning of this day until next Saturday at midnight, the Church would have us think very much of the Passion of the Lord Jesus. She would have us, as nearly as we can, form the very picture and image of it in our mind's eye. We should seem to ourselves to accompany Him through all the stages of His unspeakable Sufferings, and at last to find ourselves, by His Grave, with hearts truly devoted to Him, waiting in earnestness and patience for His glorious Resurrection.

The Holy Spirit of God Himself invites us to this particular contemplation of all the circumstances of our Lord's Passion, in that He has guided the pens of the four Evangelists to set every thing down so minutely and exactly as they have done. We who

have the Gospels, my brethren, either in our hands or within our hearing, surely it is our duty to know a good deal, and to meditate on all we know, of the manner of His wonderful and adorable Sufferings. Surely it is wrong and disrespectful in us to be content with a blind sort of notion, that Jesus Christ's death is to save us and make us happy, we know not how. Nay, my brethren, if you had been at any time in exceeding danger of your life and all that is dear to you, and some noble-hearted friend, with no deserving of yours, had saved you from it by laying down his own life, would it not be a very cold and thankless sort of behaviour in you, to go on with no sort of care to know and recollect the particulars of that great mercy? And how then can you bear yourselves, so long as you pass carelessly by, and will not even look up from your worldly tasks and pleasures, to "a see, if there be any sorrow like unto" His "sorrow," which the Lord in the day of His fierce anger laid on Him for your sins? When we love a person, we do not so pass by him. Had we but a spark of true love for Jesus Christ, we never *could* content ourselves with a mere general notion that He is our Redeemer, trying to take the benefit of His Cross without seriously thinking upon it.

This is what I fear we have too much permitted ourselves in heretofore: but let us do so no longer. Now at least, in our Redeemer's own week, let us seriously turn our minds to the particulars of His great work. What did He come to redeem us from? From all iniquity; so says the Apostle; He "b gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all

^a Lam. i. 12.

^b Tit. ii. 14.

iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." His will, His gracious will, is to deliver us not only from the punishment, but from the power of sin. By the bitter pains of His Agony, Death, and Passion, He merited for us not only forgiveness for past sins, but also grace to be altogether good and holy for the rest of our lives, if we would but use that grace. So again teaches another great Apostle: "His own Self bare our sins in His own Body on the Tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness."

Plainly, then, it is impossible for us rightly to remember His Passion, we can neither praise Christ, nor love Him, nor please Him, as we ought, except we consider and keep in mind the particulars of daily duty. We must know what sin is, and what is righteousness, if we would answer to the gracious purpose of His Death by dying to sin and living unto righteousness. And it pleased Him so to order the circumstances of His Passion, as that they should, all the way along, teach us what to do and what to avoid. As our own sufferings in a remarkable manner often turn our thoughts back to the sins which brought them on us, so if we attend to the several Sufferings of our Lord, we shall be helped to understand those sins of ours, for which those Sufferings severally were laid upon Him: and we shall know better how to fight against them, how to triumph over them by His Cross.

As an aid to us all in this great and hard work, what if we employ some part of this Holy Week in considering, one by one, the chief sins which are the

ruin of men's souls, and which are therefore called mortal or deadly, and how each one of them is overcome by the right use of the Passion of our Lord. Those sins have, from very old times, been counted by the Church as seven in number; and it may be well for us to take one of them for each of the seven days of the Holy Week: that so, while we see how utterly contrary it is to the true meaning and virtue of the Sufferings of Christ, we may be the rather moved to earnest repentance for our own past transgressions in that kind; may pray the more humbly to have them washed away by His all-atoning Blood, and may seek and watch, with all our hearts, for grace, never more to separate ourselves from Him in the same way.

The first of these seven mortal sins is Pride: i. e., an inordinate and wrong opinion, in some way or other, of one's own merit: and the Heavenly grace opposite to it, the fruit of Christ's gracious Spirit, is Humility. To this therefore we must turn our thoughts to-day: even as our Prayer-Book teaches both in the Collect and in the Epistle. In the Epistle, this is the very use we are instructed to make of the Cross: that, looking towards it, we should try to have the same mind ^d which was in Him Who hung upon it: Who being in the form of God and equal with God, made as though He had no value for His high and glorious Nature, but "emptied Himself" of His glory, and "took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." And in the collect we pray accordingly, that, whereas the

^d Phil. ii. 5-8.

Father, of His tender love to mankind, gave His only Son to suffer death upon the Cross, and His will was that we should follow the example of that His great Humility, so He would actually give us grace to follow the example of His Patience. Thus our Church, in coming under the shadow of the Cross, teaches us to apply ourselves, first of all, to the humbling of our proud hearts. Pride is the first deadly sin, which we are now to bring to Jesus to be healed.

Consider then our Lord's Passion, how from beginning to end it is plainly meant to cure this sin of Pride in particular. Consider Him first, where He was to-day, entering into the city Jerusalem, His own capital city, not as became Him, the true King of the Jews, but in a most lowly and quiet and humble manner, riding upon an ass, amidst His lowly disciples, and the simple children praising Him. He was the great King and Lord, not of Jerusalem only, but of all nations; the Owner of the gold and silver, the jewels and treasures, of the whole world: but He declines it all for the present, because He is come to suffer for sinners. How then do sinners appear in His eyes, if they seek after such things, and value themselves on them?

But if even our Lord's Procession on Palm Sunday, which was a token of His final greatness, was so ordered as to teach Humility, what shall we say to the course and manner of His bitter Passion itself, when once it began? Truly it so goes on from beginning to end, as if He never could sink Himself low enough: one deep of pain and humiliation calling as it were another, and striving which should more entirely overwhelm Him, and more completely put us and

our proud ways to shame. The Passion may be considered to have begun at that last passover of our Lord, when He was to bid farewell to His disciples, and leave them His last and dearest token of His love. And how does He, Who has all things in His Hands, the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth; how does He robe and dress Himself for His royal Feast? He rises from supper, lays aside His garments, takes a towel and girds Himself: after that He pours water into a bason and begins to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Thus He takes on Himself, even to the eye, the form of a slave. Thus He represents, as in figure and parable, the wonderful and most gracious Mystery of His Incarnation. As He then, in a manner, laid aside His glory, so now He lays aside His ordinary garments. As He had taken the flesh and soul of man, which in all others is enslaved to sin, so now He takes a towel and girds Himself. As in all His Life He had ministered to His sinful creatures, so now He begins to wash His disciples' feet. He Himself declared His own meaning. He was giving us an example to do as He did to us. If we will be like Him, like Him crucified, we must never be above waiting on any one. Be he never so poor, or disagreeable, or wicked, we are to put ourselves in his place, to do him what good we can, and esteem ourselves unspeakably honoured in doing so. I say, be he never so wicked: for did not our Lord wash the feet of Judas, even after the devil had put it into his heart to betray Him? Think for a moment what a thing it was for the Lord of life and glory, in Whom "we live, and move, and have our being,"

to be thus humbling Himself before so unworthy a person : and for shame's sake stop yourself, whenever again you are tempted to slight or despise any person. Say to yourself, "Christ washed Judas' feet; who am I, that I should be above putting myself in my neighbour's place, and waiting on him? Where is the worm so far beneath me, as the best of the Apostles was beneath Jesus Christ?" Yet He, their Lord and Master, washed their feet. Why? That we might learn to wash one another's feet. Which of us all has done so? Which of us all has submitted himself, as his Master did, to the will even and fancy of those whom he might have commanded? Alas! we have been far unlike our Saviour; far too much taken up with admiring and pleasing ourselves, and making others wait upon us. Instead of making ourselves servants to all, we are commonly affronted at not being waited on, not being thought of, by our brethren. Let us, at least in this week of our Lord's humiliation, study to have a better mind. Let us pray to Him to make us more like Himself. Let us watch for the little occasions, which continually arise, of denying and putting down our own proud thoughts.

And let us not be weary in this work of humbling ourselves. Our Lord was not weary of it, but went on lowering and lowering Himself more and more, until He had quite completed His bitter Passion. See how He permitted them to use Him, when the time of His apprehension came. As He had been in the Supper-chamber, so He was in the Garden of Gethsemane. We sinners too often are content to dispraise and lower ourselves in some way; but we cannot bear for others to dispraise and lower us. We demean

ourselves for form's sake, but we had rather not be taken at our word. We call ourselves (e. g.,) miserable sinners; but should we not be angry if persons really treated us as such? But Christ could bear, nay chose to be ill-treated by others. Knowing what should come upon Him, the kiss of Judas, and the rude hands of the officers, the cords with which they would bind Him, the reproachful words they would speak: how they would seize, chain, drag Him along; He nevertheless, of His own free-will, put Himself in the way of it all. We sinners think it a great thing to guard ourselves against disaster, loss and inconvenience. So long as we do well unto ourselves, men speak good of us and think us clever, and we think ourselves the same. We take pride in being good managers: but behold He Who is Wisdom itself gives Himself up to seem in careless eyes the weakest, the most deceived of mankind. Regard and see, how patiently He permits the traitor Judas to come near and betray Him with a kiss, speaking to him at first as if He knew not his purpose: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" how He lets them seize and bind Him, He Who holds in His Hands the very being both of heaven and earth: how He consents to be dragged along, first to one High Priest's house and then to another, and to be smitten and rudely dealt with; He by Whom only each one of them had power to move hand or foot. Consider it well, for there are deep mysteries in it: and among the rest, surely it conveys a most keen reproof to us, who, being members of so lowly and humble a Head, so often give way to proud and self-conceited thoughts of our own power and wisdom and skill.

Consider Him next, as the morning comes on, brought before the chief Priests and Elders first, and then before Pilate and Herod, and see how meekly and submissively He bears Himself under the most cruel and provoking injustice: they keep Him bound, they permit Him to be smitten, they ask Him all manner of ensnaring questions, they seek all around for false witness against Him: He hears all, either in silence or with grave and charitable warnings. So again, before Pilate, bad as He knew him to be, Christ utters no word of reproach: nor again before Herod, but is content to suffer in silence what they lay upon Him: leaving us an example, how humbly we should submit ourselves to those who are in authority over us, whether in God's Church, as were those High Priests, and as Bishops and other chief ministers are now, or in the state according to the law of the land: such as are kings and magistrates of all degrees. If we will follow where our Master leads, instead of rebelling against ill-usage from such persons, and behaving ill to them in our turn, we shall endure it in silence, yet not in sullen silence: pleading, as our Lord did before Pilate, so far as may be enough to stay our persecutors' hands, except they be thoroughly hardened in heart. Our Lord did this; for He explained to Pilate, that His kingdom was not of this world, and therefore need not interfere with that of Cæsar: but having said this, for the rest of His time He permits Himself, without a word, to be vehemently accused of the chief Priests, mocked by Herod and his men of war, and dressed in a white robe by way of reproach: rejected, in comparison with a robber and murderer: tied to a pillar and cruelly scourged,

and at last given up to be crucified : while too many of us, who call ourselves His people, cannot well endure the least interference with our own wish or convenience even from the laws of God's Spirit in the Church or of His appointed servants in the state. We complain and grumble, how ill-used we are ; we give people to understand, how much better we know than those who are set over us. Only those, who follow Christ in earnest, bear the rod meekly, however unjust and painful.

But see now our holy and patient Saviour, as the woe comes thicker and thicker upon Him, in hands of the rude heathen soldiers, who being used to wait on Pilate and to execute sentence on the worst criminals, had their hearts hardened to delight in scorn and cruelty. See how they use Him ; Him, our only Hope, our best Friend, our Redeemer and our God. First, they strip Him, they put on Him a purple or scarlet robe, such being the colours which kings used to wear. They weave a crown, not of gold or jewels, but of thorns, and put it about His Head, and a reed in His right Hand, instead of a sceptre. Thus they, without intending it, acknowledge Him a great king, a king of sorrows : but their hearts are set on making His last hours as bitter and painful as they can ; they bow the knee before Him, and worship Him in derision ; they take the reed and smite Him on the Head ; so driving the cruel thorns more and more into His tender Body : they spit on Him, and then, taking off the mock dress, they put His own clothes on Him, and lead Him away to crucify Him. Why does He suffer such things ? He suffers it, to atone for our pride and folly, who have so often taken a vain and sinful pleasure in fine clothes, in compliments, in

the vanities of the world ; who have despised others, most likely better than ourselves, for going about plain and poor and simple ; who have allowed ourselves, it may be, to grow envious, cross, and discontented, when we saw others outshining us in such things as these. My brethren and sisters, if there be any of you who have ever sinned, or still are in a way to sin, after this sort, I beseech you, try and think in earnest of your Lord and Saviour, enduring such mockery for you. Cure your pride of apparel, your love of pomp and show, your fondness for being admired, by stedfastly looking at Him, first stripped, then clothed but in mockery. Cure your vain conceit of your own beauty, and your unreasonable admiration of beauty in others, by stedfast remembrance of Him, in Whom was "no form nor comeliness ; no beauty," when He was seen, that men should desire Him.

Again, if you are tempted to be proud of your bodily strength, of your power and skilfulness in any kind of work, and so to depend upon yourself and despise others, and think but little and seldom of your God : remember, I beseech you, Jesus Christ bearing His Cross. See how the cruel weight galls Him and presses Him down, faint as He is already with loss of blood, from scourging, and from His bloody sweat, and from all that He has suffered besides. He is so overcome that He sinks under the burthen, and they are fain to compel one Simon, whom they meet in the way, to bear the Cross after Him, and lighten His load a little. He endures all this, to make amends for your many sins, your bad use of your bodily strength and skill, your limbs and your sinews, and your proud selfish and insolent thoughts words and

deeds, to which the devil at sundry times has tempted you by occasion of your high health and strength. He suffers for it all. For very thankfulness' sake, do you try to suffer some little with Him. Let the sight of Him fainting under the Cross, at least prevail on you to add no more to His burthen by indulging such evil imaginations any more. Henceforth let no height of health or spirits make you other than mild and gentle to others, strict and self-denying to yourself, humble and teachable and full of fear towards God.

So may you the less unworthily follow your Divine and suffering Redeemer yet one step further, and see how He finally subdues and destroys the evil spirit of pride by the deepest humiliation of all. See, they bring Him to Calvary, the vilest place, strewn most likely with the bones of the worst malefactors. There He is stripped again; stretched on the Cross; His most Sacred Hands and Feet nailed through and through: lifted up for three long hours and more, to hang, as it were, upon those Wounds between earth and heaven. There is a robber on each side of Him crucified with Him, but He is in the middle place, as the worst of the three. ° All they that pass by Him, laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in God, that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, if He will have Him. The very thieves cast the same in His teeth; and even in His death, they do not spare Him. His very last complaint of thirst is treated with mockery, and they do but offer Him vinegar to drink. All this He bears as the meek Lamb of God, with no word or look of resistance: as

° Ps. xxii. 7, 8.

a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so openeth He not His mouth. And we sinful men, too often deadly inexcusable sinners, are impatient of the least word or look of affront. How many could hardly find it in their hearts to forgive an insulting blow! And here the Lord of heaven and earth gives His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that pluck off the hair: He hides not His face from shame and spitting: He draws back, in no respect, from the worst of pain and reproach which the Evil one could teach His cruel enemies to invent.

Finally we, foolish and unworthy, cannot bear to own ourselves helpless, cannot patiently submit to be guided. Who is Lord over us? we are apt to say. Pride makes us impatient and discontented towards God, wilful and rebellious towards those who are in God's place. But let us draw near to the foot of the Cross: let us look up: what is it which we see? The Son of God, the King of Israel, permits His enemies to have their own way with Him, yields Himself up to the extremity of pain, bows His Head and gives up the Ghost, as if He were no more able to help Himself than any other child of Adam. He dies and is buried: He is taken down from the Cross, wrapped in His grave-clothes, laid in the sepulchre: thus resigning Himself altogether to the lot which sin has brought upon us all. Can earth and ashes, can sin and misery, look on this and go on being proud? Nay, now at least, in His Own Week, let us pray to the Lord Jesus to grant us better minds: let us lay our haughty and stubborn wills at His Feet: let us beseech Him heartily to make us humble; for that is all one with making us happy for ever.

SERMON XXXVI.

THE CROSS A REMEDY FOR THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

FOR COVETOUSNESS.

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

THE second of those sins, which the Church calls mortal or deadly, because they kill the soul of man by separating it from Christ Who is its life, just as surely as deadly poison kills his body, is Covetousness, i. e., an inordinate love of money, and of the good things of this world: such a love as causes a man to wish to get all he can of it for himself, and very unwillingly to spare it to others. You may take notice, that as the first deadly sin, Pride, is in a special sense the devil's own sin: (for by Pride, most likely, he sinned, and threw himself from Heaven,) so this second, which is Covetousness, is in a special manner the sin of the world: and Lust the third, the sin of the flesh. Covetousness, I say, is especially the sin of the world: for what is it we mean, when we say a person is covetous? We mean that he tries to get more than his proper share of worldly goods, the things which seem good here on earth: more money, more land, more houses, more credit, more jewels and fine clothes, more diversion, pleasure, and amusement; more people looking up to him, more power and consequence with those among whom he

lives. Covetousness is caring too much for these things, wanting to have all the best of them for one's self, thinking it very hard and intolerable, when you are left with little or none of them.

But if this be what we mean by Covetousness, you see at once, how the Cross and Passion of Christ Jesus is or ought to be a perfect cure for that sin. In His Life there had been little or nothing of what the world uses to admire, but in His Death surely all is gathered together, which the world most abhors and shrinks from. He had lived in poverty, He died utterly destitute. He lived in retirement and little thought of; He died amidst cruel reproaches filling the air on all sides. He lived far from the pleasures and enjoyments of ordinary men; He "a poured out His soul unto death" in most bitter agonies. And this He did, of His own free will. He, the Creator and Owner of all, of His own accord parted with all. When He was rich, b for our sake He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. Whoever then, by much prayer, meditation and self-denial, has obtained grace from God to conform himself to the Cross of Christ, that man has overcome the evil spirit of Covetousness. His Lord, speaking for him as well as for Himself, says plainly, "c I have overcome the world." Oh happy news for the poor restless children of Adam, toiling night and day, and wearing themselves out for a little heap of money, for a passing shadow of pleasure, for a breath of praise, gone into air and worth nothing as soon as it is uttered; half-conscious that all this is at best but a plaything to soothe them and make them forget

^a Isa. liii. 12.

^b 2 Cor. viii. 9.

^c S. John xvi. 33.

their misery for a time, yet feeling as if they had no power to break their chain, and look after better things! Oh happy and joyful news for them, that now their chain is utterly broken, the better things, things infinitely good, are brought even within their reach, and are theirs for ever, if they will but lay hold of them. Their “^d soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, the snare is broken, and” they “are delivered.”

Suppose your trial to be, what almost all men’s trial is, at one time or another, whether you can contentedly give up some one or more of these earthly good things, on which you have set your heart, but which God sees it best for you to do without: suppose you are vexed and tossed with care and anxiety, and know not how to reconcile yourself to your Father’s will: here your Lord invites you, in His Own Week, to accompany Him by night into that mournful Garden, and see whether you cannot find there a cure for all your worldly anxiety and trouble. Look at Him, withdrawing Himself from His disciples, kneeling down, throwing Himself on the ground, falling flat on His Face: hear Him three times repeating the same prayer, “Father, not My Will, but Thine be done:” observe how, with the violence of His Agony, the very Sweat, which bursts from Him, is as Blood falling down to the ground. Thus Jesus Christ sacrifices His own Will, and offers it once for all to His Father, that you, being made a member of Him, may learn to do the same: to be contented and thankful, with whatever portion, sweet or bitter, God allows you in this life: thinking ever with

^d Ps. cxxiv. 6.

yourself, "What right have I to complain at not having my own way, when I know that my Master and Saviour sacrificed His own pure and innocent Will at the cost of such an unspeakable agony?" By such thoughts as these, accompanied always with sincere prayer, we may obtain grace from Christ to sweeten our bitter cup. He will put His Shoulder to our yoke and our burthen, and will make it His own, and then it will be quite certain in the end to turn out "easy and light" to us.

Suppose again, your temptation to be of a different sort: that, instead of causing you to repine at the loss of earthly goods, your enemy is seeking to make you put your trust in what you have of them. Be it little or much, you are tempted to set your heart on it: you go on, from day to day, looking after your shop, your farm, your little property of whatever kind, and it quite entirely takes you up, you have little or no thought of your Creator and Saviour, little or no thought of another world. You are in great danger, and do not know it. The Angels are looking anxiously upon you, and fear exceedingly, lest, when you die, you go wrong through this deadly sin of Covetousness. But behold, Christ is come near to save you: His Cross is at this very time lifted up close to you: there you see Him Whose token you bear, and to Whose likeness you must be conformed, patiently enduring the loss of all things, stripped even of the garments which He daily wore, and permitting His persecutors to cast lots for them in His Presence. Look earnestly upon this sight, and refrain yourself, the next time you feel inclined to be vexed and angry, or too full of care, about any of

your worldly property. Look at the deep poverty of Jesus stripped on the Cross; see Him on that painful Bed of Death: no comfort, no soothing, no one to care for supporting or relieving Him; His dying Thirst supplied only by a cruel and insulting offer of vinegar. Look at this, and for very shame leave off taking the best of everything for yourself, contriving all for your own comfort and profit.

And if you still want more lessons to warn you against worldly Covetousness, consider that it was the very sin, by which, more than any other, the devil prevailed on the enemies of Christ to treat Him as they did. Why did Judas betray Him? He coveted first the money in our Saviour's purse; then that, for which the precious ointment might have been sold; then the thirty pieces of silver, for which he actually sold his Master. Why were the Jews so earnest to slay Him? Because His teaching interfered with their worldly projects. Why did Pilate give Him up? For fear of the worldly harm which Cæsar might do him. Thus the world was the true murderer of Christ. Let us, as lovers of Christ, try to hate the world. Let us not be the slaves of our possessions, whether little or much. Let us never forget this rule of our Master's household, "e It is more blessed to give than to receive."

e Acts xx. 35.

SERMON XXXVII.

THE CROSS A REMEDY FOR THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

FOR LUST.

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

As our first great enemy, the devil, tempts us in an especial way to Pride, and our second, the world, to Covetousness, so our third, which is called the flesh, i. e. the corrupt nature which we have from Adam, does in a particular manner, tempt to the Lust of uncleanness, to those sins which are contrary to the seventh commandment. How shocking such sins are, is evident from this, that not only holy persons, but all persons not entirely hardened, naturally shrink from the very naming of them : men naturally hang down their heads and speak lower, when such verses as these are read in Scripture ; “The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness ;” or again our Lord’s saying, “ Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” Yet it is but too certain, that many who would be shocked at the name, have so far listened to their subtle enemy, as not to be shocked at the crimes themselves. It is a deep and subtle temptation, beginning early in life, and continuing often, in heart and mind, all one’s life long. Very grievous indeed are its effects, as all men know who do but

look around them, so that one may well understand how a great and holy man of old might say, that no one sin ruins so many souls as this. No one evil habit, we may well believe, leads so many souls captive to the devil as lust, or the inordinate desire of sensual pleasure. It is the more necessary, that young persons should take the warnings of their elders, who know the snares of the Evil one. In the matter of pleasure and amusement, perhaps more than all others, it is quite entirely needful for the youthful and inexperienced to submit their own wills and judgements to those who know better, and not to think such and such liberties safe and innocent, because they see and mean no harm in them.

The warnings and restraints of elders and betters, and the checks of natural shame and modesty, are some of God's merciful ways for keeping persons from the beginning of mischief. But the one only sufficient cure and safeguard is the Cross of Jesus Christ. For the case is this,—to put it in few words. Inasmuch, as that which leads us wrong ever since Adam's sin, is pleasure, God has ordained that the remedy should be by pain: the pain which Jesus Christ bore on the Cross, making satisfaction to His Father for the innumerable evil thoughts, words, and actions, into which we have at sundry times been led by our corrupt fleshly appetites. And again inasmuch as for the time to come we have to fight against those evil appetites, and overcome the flesh, and bring it under subjection to the Spirit: there is no other way of doing this than what Christ Himself pointed out; our taking up our cross, and bearing it after Him: denying ourselves for the sake of Him,

Who thought nothing too dear to give up, no pain too sharp to be endured for our sake. Pain is the ordained remedy of evil desire : Christ's pain on the Cross the atonement for sins past and repented of : our pain in following the Cross, our self-denial and mortification, the cure for the evil habit of Lust in our minds and lives. If then we would thoroughly overcome this bad spirit, so hateful to God and good men, we must apply to ourselves in some true way, not in word and fancy only, the Cross of Christ. We must somehow bear pain with Him and for Him. There is no help for it. Why should we think it much to do so ? Consider His blessed Body, how it was a Body of suffering from beginning to end. It was never softened and indulged by any kind of worldly ease and enjoyment. The light of this world first came upon it in the rude Cave at Bethlehem : it grew up in poverty to man's estate ; it was exercised for the most part of His life in a mean and laborious trade ; when His ministry began, it had no rest : His Feet were worn out with hard journeys ; His Knees with continual prayer ; His Eyes with devout watchings ; His blessed Head had no home, where it might depend on finding a little rest. Thus He lived, thus He kept Himself in a manner trained for His last great Sacrifice. That tender and delicate Body, with all its limbs and senses thus exercised before in suffering, He devotes in His Agony as by a solemn ceremony, to the most grievous pain and death, which He knew was coming on. The suffering therein was violent to that degree, that it wrought upon His Body also, and forced His pure Blood through His skin in great drops falling down to the ground.

Scarce was this Agony over, when His outward Pains, the Pains from His enemies, began. See how Judas guides the soldiers and servants of the High Priest to take Him: how they seize Him rudely, bind Him with cords, smite Him, buffet Him again and again, drag Him along first to Annas, then to Caiaphas, then to Pilate, then to Herod and back again; so that the very weariness must have been a grievous punishment to His frail and fainting Body. Presently Pilate pronounces His condemnation; and see, the soldiers, more hardened in cruelty than the Jews, seize Him and bind Him to a pillar, and scourge Him with their savage whips, loaded, perhaps, with lead; and so He pours out a second and larger offering of His Sacred Blood. Then they take thorns, leaves with sharp and strong prickles, and make them into a crown which they force roughly upon His Head; and afterwards, striking it harshly with the reed which they found for Him as a mock sceptre, they drive the points of the thorns into His Head. Then they load Him, weary and exhausted as He was, with the heavy Cross, and force Him to the place of execution, up a hill, a distance considerable to one in such enfeebled condition. But who shall describe what they do next? The Cross is laid upon the ground; they lay Him upon it; they drive their un-pitying nails, first through one Blessed Hand and then through the other, and so into the wood of the Cross: those Hands which were the healing of all sicknesses, and the terror of all Bad spirits, and which had been stretched out day and night to bless them. They cross one Foot over the other, and through both they drive another of their cruel nails, and fasten them in

like manner to the upright beam of the Cross. Then they lift it up with Him bleeding upon it; they fix it in its place, and leaving Him to hang upon His wounds, they sit down to their own hard-hearted amusements, one of which is mocking Him in His agonies, and another playing at dice for His Vesture. And He endures the unspeakable pain for three hours at least, before He will permit His Soul to depart, before He will say "It is finished:" before He will give Himself up to the last secret and mysterious pain of all, the pain of death, which, for aught we know, may be worse than all the rest put together. So much time, so much pain, such variety of extreme torture, did it take to atone for our sinful lusts and provide us with a cure for them.

And now what are we to do, that we may not cast away from us the benefit of this healing mercy? Something surely we must do: we dare not go on taking our fill of the world, enjoying every pleasure as it comes, now we know that the spirit of evil desire is within us and on every side, and that our Saviour bore all this agony to deliver us from that bad spirit. We dare not surely go on merely enjoying ourselves; we must watch and deny our pleasures: they will else take us the contrary way to the Cross and bring us of course to the contrary end. Let us resist all those pleasures and amusements, the innocence of which we seriously doubt, however much our weak hearts are set upon them. Let our self-denial cost what it will, it cannot cost so much as our precious souls. Let us beseech God's especial guidance in this great matter of ordering our discipline aright. Let us beseech Him, and try to do so

heartily, to send us bodily pain and weakness rather than dangerous mirth and pleasure. If He answer that prayer, if affliction come really upon us, let us welcome it and count it a friend: let us learn to say with holy David, “^a I will thank the Lord for giving me warning, my reins also chasten me,” i. e. my bodily pains come on and make me remember my sins, “in the night season.” Let us punish and chastise ourselves soberly and discreetly, but quite in earnest, and the more, the less we feel of God’s chastening Hand; remembering that it is written, “^b If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged:” withal bearing it ever in mind, that all we can do or suffer is vain without the Cross: thither we must bear it all for righteousness and strength. Even our weak self-denials, if they are humbly laid at the feet of Christ crucified, will be made mighty through God to overcome the strongholds of our evil lusts.

^a Ps. xvi. 8.

^b 1 Cor. xi. 31.

SERMON XXXVIII.

THE CROSS A REMEDY FOR THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

FOR ANGER.

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

IN setting down Anger as one of the seven mortal sins, the Saints and holy and wise men of old did not, we may be sure, forget, that Anger is not always, and of itself, a sin. We are sure of this, being our Lord Himself was once angry. We read that He “^alooked about on” the unbelieving Jews “with Anger, being grieved for the hardness of their heart.” As He was grieved with a natural sorrow, so He was displeased with a natural anger. Neither of the two is in itself sinful, any more than it is sinful to feel thirst or hunger or pain. But anger is then sinful, when we continue and indulge it: when we suffer it to prevail against brotherly love and quietness in our hearts. So the Apostle gives us to understand, in that well-known saying; “^bBe ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” That is, the only way to be angry without sin is to quiet and put down our wrath, the moment we are aware of it: just as the only thing to be done with a spark which flies out of the fire is to tread it out before it breaks into a blaze. Otherwise we run the

^a S. Mark iii. 5.

^b Eph. iv. 26.

risk of dying in the indulgence of anger, and that, S. Paul seems to warn us, would be very fearful. "Let not the sun," he says, "go down upon your wrath." If we are not to sleep without putting away anger, much more would it be dangerous to die. And we may die at any moment; therefore anger is not to be encouraged, no not for a single moment. It may be innocently felt, as our Lord felt it, when wrong is done, and those committed to our care are ill-used; but it must be put away, as soon as felt.

And how may we best put it away? Surely every man's own heart teaches him at once. Anger cannot live at the foot of the Holy Cross. For what is it we mean by Anger? It is a wrong desire of revenge; i. e., when we call a man angry, we mean that he is hurt by somewhat which some other person has done, and wants to hurt him in return. And malice is, when this feeling is long continued, so that we quite dislike the person, and wish him harm. But now, to use our Lord's own heart-searching parable, we have been ourselves forgiven ten thousand talents; we dare not therefore be severe in exacting from our brother his debt of a hundred pence. God has forgiven, for Christ's sake, our great and grievous sins: we feel at once, how unsuitable and unthankful it would be in us, not to forgive our brother that which in comparison is very little. Hear again the Apostle's words: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." You see he not only men-

tions malice and bitterness, but wrath and anger and loud words. Because, although they are not nearly so bad as malice, yet there is in them the same *kind* of mischief. As far as they go, and as long as they continue, they are contrary to the Cross. For the Cross is all forgiveness, but angry thoughts and words are all for revenge. You may make this clear to yourself by just imagining, how it would be, if in the midst of a fit of anger our blessed Lord were suddenly to shew Himself to you, as He has shewn Himself before now to some of His Saints, sleeping or waking, and cause you to look either upon the Wounds, which He on the Cross received for you, or on the very Image of His suffering Body, actually fastened to the Cross. Suppose He appeared to you, as to S. Stephen dying, or to S. Paul in the way to Damascus. Would not that sight quiet your anger at once? Would it be possible for you to go on "breathing out threatenings" or hard words against a fellow-creature, when you saw with your own eyes your Lord's agonizing Wounds, endured for His enemies, and His mild and merciful Countenance, turned towards them in anxious pity? I think not. I think there is no malice so spiteful, but would be stayed, for a moment at least, by such a sight of the Cross, and of Him Who hung upon it. Now if the sight of the Cross would so mightily prevail against Anger, of course the real believing remembrance of the Cross would have a great effect likewise. If when we are inclined to be angry and affronted with any one, we could use ourselves to call up in our minds the Image of our dying Saviour, I will answer for it, it would stay the troubled waters at once.

For consider what thoughts would naturally come along with that Image. Besides the great, the overwhelming thought, He endures all this for His enemies, and for me among the rest, who have provoked Him, and that intolerably, ten thousand times, besides this, when we look at Christ Crucified, what is it but a school of forgiveness, from beginning to end? Think over the several kinds of behaviour, which our poor frail nature feels most provoking and affronting, hardest to forgive, and most apt to make us thirst for revenge: and see whether any one of them was wanting in the treatment which our Master endured on that awful day. Is it provoking to be used ungratefully? Christ was betrayed by His own favoured disciple. Does our heart rise against those who come to us with a show of friendship, while we know that they have mischief in their hearts? Judas came to our Lord in the garden with the words, "Hail Master; and kissed Him." But from Him fell no word of passion, only a word of grave rebuke: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Again, are we tempted, with a secret kind of spite, to be pleased when we see our enemies suffer, though for one reason or another we abstain from hurting them ourselves? Our Lord was not so, but when another, in His behalf, had smitten off the right ear of the High Priest's servant, instead of saying, "It is no more than he deserves," and so leaving him to himself, His merciful Arm, bound as it had been perhaps by that very man, was presently put forth to relieve him. Jesus answered and said, "Suffer ye thus far:" i. e., let me have the use of My hand with-

out the cords just for this purpose : and He touched the man's ear and healed him.

What again is more provoking than an insolent blow ? How many are there so proud and foolish, that feel as if they could never forgive such a thing without ample revenge ! Yet behold, the Lord of Glory submits to such reproachful blows, not once nor twice, but over and over, and with every thing possible to make the affront more intolerable. A servant strikes Him, when on His trial, with the palm of his hand : He answers quietly, " If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil : if well, why smitest thou Me ? " Then they blindfold and buffet Him and bid Him guess, who it was that smote Him ; and afterwards, when He was crowned with thorns, they take the reed and smite Him on the Head : He all the while not opening His Mouth, nor so much as turning His Face away. Are insult, scornful words, mock-worship, spitting, dressing up as for a show in derision : are all these intolerable things ? He bore them all without one angry word, without any kind of resistance : " coming forth," when they bade Him, " with the crown of thorns and the purple robe." Would it be too grievous for most of us, were we at such a time to see one, who had made the largest professions, falling away and rudely taking part with our enemies ? Our Lord saw S. Peter do this, heard his denials, and how he began to curse and swear : but, instead of being angry, the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and by that gracious look saved him. And what shall we say to that prayer, so mysteriously offered up for His murderers, and with them for all mankind, but especially for those among

us Christians, who sin grievously, not knowing their high calling: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?" Remember that He spake those words at the very moment that the cruel nails were being rudely driven through His tender limbs. His care was for their souls. If *they* might repent and be forgiven (and some of them we know did afterwards repent), He was content to suffer what His Father pleased. Remember all these things, and forget not all along, that He to Whom they happened is the Most High God, Begotten from everlasting of the Father: so that each wrong, each provocation done to Him, is infinite, i. e., unspeakably great, and beyond all thought of our's. What, compared with the least that He meekly endured, are all the provocations, all the ill-usage that can be shewed to us? How ashamed ought we to be of Anger: much more of malice!

SERMON XXXIX.

THE CROSS A REMEDY FOR THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

FOR INTEMPERANCE OR GLUTTONY.

THURSDAY BEFORE EASTER.

THE fifth of those seven mortal sins, by which ordinarily the souls of men are ruined, is called Gluttony or Intemperance, and is contrary to Temperance and Soberness, as Pride is to Humility, and Lust to Chastity. It consists in an inordinate love of meat and drink ; when people either take too much, or are greedy and selfish about getting the best for themselves, or set their minds upon it in the wrong way ; not thanking God for what He gives them, or displeased and discontented, when He denies them what they like. All such behaviour as this goes by the name of Intemperance ; and if it be allowed and practised and get possession of our souls, it is very grievous and deadly sin : and no person who is a slave to it, dying in that condition, can possibly be saved. Most people soon come to know and acknowledge this, in respect of the love of strong drink, when it is carried very far. They own at once, that drunkenness is deadly sin. They see the ruin that it brings upon men's health, and how it wastes their property, and the comfort of their families. But we

are apt to forget, that in deed and in truth gluttony or immoderate love of eating is a deadly sin also. It separates the soul from God quite as thoroughly as drunkenness, and wants so much the more watchfulness and prayer, in that it gives no such plain notice of itself, as drunkenness does, and people may go far towards it, in a blind way, without knowing it themselves.

It may seem remarkable at first sight, that such ordinary things as eating and drinking, such slight affairs, such mere matters of course, as our behaviour at our meals, should be of such very great consequence, and occasion either a deadly sin or a principal help to holiness. Thoughtless persons may perhaps say to themselves, "What signifies a morsel of meat or a drop of drink, more or less?" But this is just as foolish as in the matter of spending money, when persons say, "It is but a very little here and a very little there," and forget that so many "very littles" make up a great deal: or, in the matter of time, "it is but a moment wasted on this trifle, and another moment on that;" but add these moments together and their sum comes to days and years and a whole life. So it is with men's daily excesses or daily self-denials in the matter of eating and drinking: the faults may seem to a man, each taken by itself, as nothing so very bad, and the exercise of goodness, very trifling; yet the one, summed up, may be in God's sight deadly sin, the other, by His grace, may prove a very material help to holiness. God has so made us, that our bodily refreshment, our meat and drink, and our behaviour regarding it, must needs take up a great part of our mind and of our life. It is a very considerable

portion of our trial; it must therefore in the end tell greatly on our salvation or damnation.

Consider, too, that the very first sin, that which brought death into the world, was a sin of this sort. It was lusting after, and eating, that which was forbidden. “^aThe woman saw, that the tree was good for food,” and she put forth her hand, and “took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat;” although they both knew very well, that Almighty God had said, “^bIn the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” Think seriously of this, and you cannot but perceive, that it must be very fatal to our souls to slight the danger we are all in of offending, in respect of meat and drink. That which ruined Adam in Paradise can be no mere plaything for us, his fallen descendants, in a wicked world.

We may observe too with devout wonder, that as sin came first by eating, so the perfect remedy against sin is appointed to be had by eating also. Sin came in by partaking of the Tree of Knowledge; Life and Holiness by partaking of the Tree of Life. For what is the Tree of Life? Surely it is that Wood, on which He, Who is the Life of our souls, hangs, as its proper fruit, to be eaten of those to whom He gives. What is that Wood, but the blessed and healing Cross? And what is the fruit that hangs there, but the Body of Jesus Christ? He gives Himself not only for us, but to us: not only as a sacrifice but as a meal. He would have us partake of His sacrificed Flesh and Blood, as the Jews partook of the flesh of the Paschal Lamb. He has ordained

^a Gen. iii. 6.

^b Ib. ii. 17.

the Holy Eucharist, or Communion, on purpose that we may do so. This day, Thursday before Easter, is the very day, on which Christ ordained that Sacrament. It is therefore one of the greatest and most blessed days in the year: and it seems particularly fit that, on this day, we and all who desire to be true penitents should humble ourselves in an especial manner for the many sins we may have committed in the way of eating and drinking, for our greediness in taking as much as ever we liked, and whatever we liked, as often as we could get it: for our selfishness and little consideration of others in such matters: for allowing our minds and thoughts to dwell too much upon pleasures of that kind, perhaps even when we were at our prayers: for grumbling and discontent with the portion, which God had provided for us: for neglecting to thank Him for it: for envying others and coveting what they had. All sins of this sort, I say, as well as all excess of rioting and drunkenness, we do well to think sadly of to-day, as being sins which, in a particular manner, dishonour that Holy Feast which on this day began to be the Life of sinners. Eating and drinking inordinately of earthly food must needs make a man unfit and unable to eat and drink those most Holy Things, which our Saviour has here provided for us. “^c Be not drunk with wine,” says S. Paul, “wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit.” As much as to say, that you cannot have both. If you are “mighty to mingle strong drink,” you forfeit the cup of blessing which the Apostles bless, which is the Communion of the Blood of Christ. And by the same rule, if your

^c Eph. v. 18.

heart is set upon revelling and feasting, if your meals are the chief thing you care for, either in the way of discontent or of excess, you are but ill prepared for the Bread which the Apostles break, which is the Communion of the Body of Christ.

But for this sin, as for all other, the Holy Cross provides a remedy. There hangs One, Who, having all His Life long made it His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work, now, in His dying moments, is content to take nothing but vinegar and gall, in order to atone for our intemperance and luxury. The Psalmist had prophesied it of Him long ago. "They gave Me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty, they gave Me vinegar to drink." And it is remarkable, how such bitter potions are mentioned as part of the Passion on the Cross from the beginning to the end. First, at the very moment of His being fastened to it, they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall, or as S. Mark says, "wine mingled with myrrh." From time to time, as He hung upon the Cross, the soldiers, says S. Luke, kept mocking Him, coming to Him and offering Him vinegar, as if one should cruelly insult a sick person in his feverish thirst with some bitter and nauseous draught. And this continued till the very last moment. For S. John informs us, that just before He cried out and gave up the Ghost, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He said, "I thirst:" and the other Evangelists, as well as S. John, tell, how at the point of death He had vinegar offered Him on the point of a reed. That gall and vinegar was not only the outward sign of their hate and His bitter sufferings: it was according to our human feelings a very consider-

able addition to those sufferings, in respect both of the pain of thirst, which was mocked instead of relieved by it, and of the unpitying mockery and cruelty which offered it to Him. No doubt, as He bore the shame of the Cross to atone for our pride, and the pain of the Cross, to atone for our Lust, and the poverty of the Cross to atone for our Covetousness, so He bears the hunger and thirst of the Cross, to atone for our Intemperance.

And shall not we think of Him, and keep ourselves in order for His sake? If we are rich enough to afford it, shall we ever go on, feast days and fasting days alike, with our full meals and our dainty meats, while He is tasting gall for us, and has nothing but vinegar to refresh His dying thirst? Or if we are poor, shall we allow ourselves to murmur and repine at the want of those bodily satisfactions, and envy those who have plenty of them? Shall we think it hard, that we may not feast at our ease, while He is hanging on the Cross, His strength dried up like a potsherd, and His tongue cleaving to His gums? Nay, let us accept the blessing, which He died to purchase for us, the blessing of being above these bodily cares, even while we are in the body: the blessing which He offered when He said, “^dTake no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink. Is not the life more than meat?” “^eHe that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things” that we need, for our bodies as well as our souls?

^d S. Matt. vi. 25.

^e Rom. viii. 32.

SERMON XL.

THE CROSS A REMEDY FOR THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

FOR ENVY.

GOOD FRIDAY.

THE sixth of the deadly sins which our Lord overcame by His Cross and Passion, is that which we call Envy, which, as you know, is mentioned in the Litany together with "Hatred and Malice, and all Uncharitableness." It is not the same with Hatred and Malice, though it directly leads to those miserable sins. For by Envy we mean a sadness and repining at something, which we fancy good, befalling another man rather than ourselves. As for example, Cain envied Abel, because Abel's offering was favourably received of the Lord, while his own was not. Joseph's brethren envied him, because their father Jacob loved him more than all his children, and made him a coat of many colours. Saul envied David, because the people praised and loved David more than himself. The chief priests and elders envied our Lord, for much the same reason, viz., the world going after Him, instead of being guided by their teaching, and looking up to them as the best and wisest. But the chief example of Envy is in him, who is the father and beginner of all sin. The pain of all these wicked

men, which they felt at the good of their neighbours, was but the copy of the evil lesson which the great Original set them at first. For why did Satan tempt our first parents, and strive so earnestly to make them sin? It was out of envy: he could not bear to see them happy in God's favour, and in the innocence which he had thrown away from him. "a Through envy of the devil came death into the world," and for the like envy afterwards he sought to persecute Job. He could not bear to see that "perfect and upright man" prospering in God's favour, and went about to cause him, if he could, to "curse God and die:" only God's grace and blessing so abode with Job, and he was so steady in resisting the great temptation, that the devil could only retire, disappointed and overcome.

Envy then being a principal work of the devil, indeed the spring and ground of all his other works in this world, and our Lord having come into the world on purpose to destroy the works of the devil, it was to be expected that His Passion would, in some very particular way, be contrary to this deadly sin of Envy, and help us especially in fighting against it. And well has it fallen out, that, in our order of taking the seven mortal sins for the seven days of this week, Envy should have fallen to be considered on the Friday, the very day of the Passion, the day on which we are invited to draw nearest to the Cross.

For what is the contrary to Envy? is it not the spirit of brotherly love and charity? And where will you find such a pattern, such a triumph, of those blessed virtues of brotherly love and charity, as in

^a Wisd. ii. 24.

that which is offered to your sight on this day? For behold here is the Son of God, God Himself made Man, permitting Himself to be led as a Lamb to the slaughter, pouring out His soul unto death, not for friends but for enemies; not for righteous men, but for sinners; not for a few favourites, but for the whole world. Consider it well, those among you especially, who have been able to spend this sacred Day, as all thoughtful Christians, all who are not utterly hardened, would wish to spend it. You who have been really trying to follow the Lord Jesus from beginning to end of this the last day of His mortal Life: who remembered Him, when you awaked in the morning, how early soever it might be, that He was beforehand with you; He had begun to suffer long before you had begun to pray, for the whole night was a night of suffering to Him: who thought of Him at cockerowing standing before the High Priest, bound and buffeted, and looking sadly at His weak Apostle who had just denied Him: you who, at the prime of the day, saw Him, with your mind's eye, brought before Pilate and in silence hearing Himself most wrongfully accused: who at nine o'clock were led to think of Him, rejected in comparison with Barabbas, and cruelly scourged, for our healing: who at mid-day watched Him, submitting to be nailed to His Cross, and from that time to three o'clock, endeavoured to be with Him as you best might, in all His pain and thirst and desolation: who were not absent in spirit, when He gave up the Ghost: who are, even now, waiting reverently by the sepulchre, where His faithful disciples have laid Him. Think over what you have seen and heard

to-day. Was there ever sorrow like unto this Sorrow? Was there ever charity like unto This Charity?

First of all, ascend in your hearts to the contemplation of the infinite love of the Everlasting Father, love faintly shadowed forth by what you heard this morning of Abraham's offering up his dearly-beloved Isaac. Consider those words of the Apostle, "He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all." He gave His only Son out of His Bosom, out of that eternal Home of all joy and bliss unutterable, to bear all that has been said, and more.

Then come back to our gracious Lord Himself, and consider Him over and over again, how lovingly and without all grudging He yields Himself up, soul and body, for all: for Jew and Gentile, for neighbour and stranger, for friend and enemy, for good and bad: for so speak the holy writers: "He gave Himself a ransom for all:" "He is the Saviour of all, especially of them that believe:" "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

And He yields Himself, not only to save but to glorify us. It was a light thing to deliver men from sin and hell: He would also make them partakers of holiness and heaven. While we, wretched selfish sinners, can hardly see without grudging any great and rare blessing bestowed on another, Jesus Christ the Son of God, is suffering and dying both for us and them, that we may together be partakers of the Divine Nature and of the fulness of joy which is at God's own right hand for ever. While some of us envy their brethren a fuller and more enjoyable meal than their own, He has been providing for us the Bread of Angels, the New Wine of the Kingdom of

God, His own Body and Blood in the Holy Communion. Remember the Prayer which He made last evening, just before He entered upon His Agony. He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and made His last dying request to His Father. And for whom did He pray? For us all: for His faithful Apostles in the first place, and then for all who should believe on Him through their word. He prayed, we trust, for you, for me, for all Christians: and it was no scanty measure of blessing that He asked. He spake not, as a grudging or unwilling benefactor, when He said, “^a Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word: that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory, which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, that they may be one even as We are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.” O folly and blindness and most hateful selfishness of ours! to be envying and grudging one another this and that good thing, while the Everlasting Son rejoices in the thought of His unworthy servants being loved of His Father as He is: while He longs to see them partakers of His own glory: while He lays down His life for them, because He accounts nothing too good for them. See how freely He pours out His Blood on the Cross: hear with what royal bounty He promises to the repenting Thief, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” There is no delay, no grudging. Paradise, and no

^a S. John xvii. 20-23.

less, is the penitent's portion: "to-day," and no later, is the time. And as on His first approach to the Cross He had prayed for His murderers, so within a very few weeks He offered them forgiveness according to that prayer, sending His Holy Spirit from heaven, to enter, if they would permit Him, into their hearts and cause them to believe and be saved. Even as ever since, day by day, He still goes on offering even to backsliding Christians, who are worse than His murderers, the same Blessed Spirit, to bring them to the same pardon on the same repentance. He counts not heaven too dear a thing for them who have crucified Him afresh by their sins, if only they come to Him with true contrition and amendment.

How should cold-hearted, hateful Envy abide in the same heart with so gracious, so merciful a Saviour? But, O my brethren, fight daily against it, for it is a very deceitful and subtle spirit: and many are the souls that harbour it, little suspecting that they do so. But be earnest in your self-examination, and you will soon find it out. For instance, you will fear that you are envious, if, when others are praised, you are quick and skilful in detracting from their praises: or if, when you think of their good things, you presently imagine how much better you would employ the same if you had them: or if you do not try heartily to rejoice with them that innocently rejoice. By these and other such symptoms, as by the smoke of the bottomless pit, you will presently detect the presence of the bad spirit. And how are you to drive him out? By the Passion of Christ: by setting His Cross before you, coming there for grace, and praying and striving to have some small portion of the Mind of Him Who hung upon it.

SERMON XLI.

THE CROSS A REMEDY FOR THE SEVEN
DEADLY SINS.

FOR SLOTH.

HOLY SATURDAY.

THE Lord Jesus is now at length to be thought of, as resting after His hard labours. For the first time since His Birth among men, He reposes to-day from earthly toils and anxieties. His Body is buried in peace, and His Soul is gone, where it pleases Him in the unknown places of the dead. He is at rest, and yet He goes on teaching us. As was said of righteous Abel, the first of His saints who died, "Being dead, He yet speaketh."

All dead bodies speak plainly to the living, if the living would but attend to them. All speak out and say; "You have but a short time: you will soon be as I am: how will you then wish back again every hour that you have trifled away! O begin at once to number your days: consider evermore that the time is short: what would become of you, should the Day overtake you just such as you are now?"

This sort of instruction, as I was saying, every dead corpse, every funeral brings with it: but this Holy Saturday, the day of our Lord's Repose; the quiet Tomb where He lies; His Sacred and heavenly

Body, prepared, and resting therein : all these things have a special lesson of their own, deeply to be thought on by all dutiful Christians. His Sabbath was the Crown and Top of His working-days. He alone of all Adam's children had earned a right to that pure and perfect rest, because He alone had completely finished the work, which His Father had given Him to do. He had kept all the times and laws of the Almighty. Whatever was to be brought to pass, He had accomplished it in its due season : whatever His Hand found to do, He had done it with all His might. And now from the true Rest, which He only hath attained unto ; which men long after, but know not how to find ; He seems to call aloud upon us all, warning us against the false rest of Sloth, whereof we are every moment in danger. A Voice whispers from His Sepulchre, saying, " Truly there is perfect rest here ; but before you can taste of it, your day's work must be done. You cannot do it perfectly and without blemish ; God and His good Angels know that very well : but you may do it earnestly, humbly, patiently : and then He will crown you for Christ's sake."

Thus the very act of keeping the Day, during which Christ lay in the grave, seems to preach to us against Sloth, the last of the seven mortal sins. For sloth, or idleness indulged, is indeed a deadly sin : nor need you wonder at its being so accounted, little as the foolish world may be inclined to think of it. For what is it, which we mean by Sloth, when we call it a deadly sin ? It is habitually leaving undone what ought to be done ; wilfully neglecting the task which God has set us to do. Of course then it is a

deadly sin, to be careless about one's earthly calling, idle and lazy in respect of the matters which God's providence has committed to our charge. But let not every man, who is diligent in his trade, household, or office, whom the world and himself call industrious, think himself of course free from this deadly sin of Sloth. For besides these our earthly callings, Christ has called us, one and all, to be Christians: and if we do not answer to that Name, if we strive not to fulfil that calling, then we are guilty of spiritual sloth, and no degree of exactness in our worldly employment will save us. This is the sin of those who care not to pray attentively, who look not after the state of their own hearts, who go on without self-examination, who make no particular confession of their sins, who lie down and rise up, and do not greatly concern themselves as to how matters stand between their God and them; who are taking no pains to overcome the evil ways into which they have fallen. They may be patterns of earthly diligence; but surely in the sight of our Lord and His Holy ones they are chargeable with this sin of Sloth; and their Sloth, if deliberately indulged, is a deadly sin: for it will ruin them for ever, as surely as laziness and not keeping the master's rules, will ruin the most skilful workman. For by such ways of going on a person becomes altogether out of tune for heavenly things: the Presence of God is little or nothing to him: devotion is wearisome, and the Holy Communion a task: and thus by little and little, but too surely, men fall away. What is it, for example, but spiritual Sloth, which causes so many persons, among the youthful especially, to receive the Holy Eucharist

just once after they have been confirmed, and seldom or never to present themselves at the altar again? Such persons may depend on it, they are in great danger. If they have no other wilful sin to charge themselves with, this of spiritual sloth and indolence will be enough, if they repent not, to sink them very low.

Certainly it is very plain that such persons cannot rightly keep our Lord's Passion before their eyes. There is small encouragement there for sloth and indolence. First, there is the remarkable circumstance before mentioned, that Christ sought not His rest till His work was done. We sinners are ever growing languid in our duty, saying, "Surely this is enough, and this: surely I may now leave off, and take no pains to be better." But the Holy One and the Just toiled on to the end of His course. As when He made the world, He rested not from His work till the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them: so now, in redeeming it He rested not from His Sufferings, until the winepress was thoroughly trodden; until He could say aloud, "It is finished."

Again, we, in our indolence, make as many pauses as we dare in our work, and intervals, as it were, to take breath. But Jesus Christ having begun, continued His work without intermission. His work indeed, His task of self-denial and suffering, had begun with His earthly life, and He had not ceased from it all that life long. But from this His final Passion, having once begun it, He ceased not, even for a minute's rest in sleep. It began in the Garden with His Agony on Thursday evening, and lasted all

night and all day, like waters flowing deeper and deeper round Him, until a little before six yesterday evening. There was no rest, no respite; and even when He departed, He descended into Hell; He was still engaged in doing something towards the deliverance of the fathers and Prophets which had gone before. So that, even while His Body rested in hope, His Divine Soul was engaged in His Ministry.

Again, our Lord kept up His tender care over those of whom He had taken charge, even in extreme pain and weariness. Three times in His Agony He rose up from prayer, and came to His disciples when sleeping for sorrow, to warn them how they should watch and pray. In all the bitterness He endured before the High Priest, He found leisure to turn and look upon Peter, and we know the effect of that gracious look. From the very Cross He looked down upon His Virgin Mother and His beloved disciple, and spake to them, committing them each to the other. As the Godhead never departed from Him, notwithstanding what He cried out in His extreme agony, so He spake all along with counsel and purpose, saying always what needed to be said, and just then, when it was needed.

Thus the history of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is every way fitted to rebuke our sloth and indifference, over and above that great thought, "If my soul, if my doing my duty rightly, be in Christ's sight of so infinite consequence, and so soon lost or damaged, how can I ever be careful enough of it?" Let us then endeavour sometimes (the oftener the better) when Sloth tempts us, to call up Christ's Passion in our minds. The Church, of old time, made

use of the portions of that Passion, as notes of time for every day in the year. The third the sixth and the ninth hour of the day, as well as certain other times of the night and early morning, had short prayers and psalms appointed for them: which, if a person used devoutly, he could never be distant in mind from the Cross of Christ. And against sloth and laziness, what better help, than serious thoughts of His Passion, so often repeated, and so carefully mixed up with the plan of the whole day?

Pray to God, my brethren, with all earnestness, that He would guide you more and more to perceive the benefit of frequent and regular devotions, and of ordering your time, so as to leave no portion quite idle. And fear not, if the work seem hard and strict beforehand. The rest will be the sweeter, and the end more glorious. And He Who sets the task, will make it easy by His grace.

SERMON XLII.

TWENTY-SECOND PSALM. I.

DESOLATION.

MONDAY.

VERSES 1—5.

Now that we are invited by God's gracious providence again to prepare ourselves for Good Friday and Easter Day, it seemed to me seasonable to choose for our special meditation some one of those many Psalms which speak of our Lord's Passion, and among them all this twenty-second Psalm would naturally first draw our attention, seeing that He made it especially His own, by uttering the first verse of it, with His own Divine lips, on the Cross. When He had hung there in torture now nearly three hours, and when His last breath was very nearly about to be drawn, about the ninth hour, i. e., at three in the afternoon, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and so gave us to understand; that the whole of the Psalm, though written so long before, belongs to Him far more than to David. In this way then we will consider it: if so be, through God's great and undeserved mercy, we may find help to love and fear Him better, now at least, in His own Week.

The Psalm appears to divide itself naturally into four parts or sections, three of which relate to our Lord's Sufferings, and the fourth to His Victory. The

three first portions I purpose to consider to-day, to-morrow, and the day after ; and the fourth on Thursday, the day which we keep in remembrance of our Lord's ordaining the Holy Communion.

The first portion of the Psalm consists of five verses, and is entirely taken up with describing the Desolation which our Holy Lord endured on the Cross, how He felt for the time forsaken and bereaved of His Father. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It was one of the last sufferings that He complained of, when the time came, but here in the prophecy it comes the very first. The reason of which perhaps may be, that the being forsaken of God was that, in which more especially the Passion and Agony consisted. All the rest, the bloody Sweat, the scorn and ill-usage, the scourgings and buffetings and thorny crown, the Cross itself and the pains of death, were tokens of His being so forsaken. *That* was their special bitterness: they were nothing without *that*.

But here come in two or three questions, which only true and considerate faith can answer. First, since our Lord Himself is the Most High God, how could He cry out as to another, and say, My God, My God? The reply to this we may take out of the Creed of S. Athanasius, and say, that although there is but one God, one Divine Nature, in which Christ is One with the Father, yet in that Godhead there are Three Persons, and in that respect He is distinct from the Father. "There is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost ; but the Godhead of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal." But "our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

is God and Man ;” and, “although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.” Therefore Christ might speak to the Father, and say, “My God, My God :” speaking, as indeed He was, to another Person : a Person to Whom, as the same Creed tells us, He was inferior “as touching His Manhood,” though He was equal “as touching His Godhead.”

Again, and this is the wonder of wonders, a thing which the Angels themselves desire to look into, how, it may be asked, could the Father forsake the Son ? How could the Fountain of Holiness and Blessedness be cut off from Him Who is “the Holy One and the Just ?” We know not how, only we know that in God’s eternal Wisdom it so seemed good, and that His Almightyness found a way to accomplish it. We know not how, but we do know why, the Son vouchsafed for a while to be forsaken of the Father. It was because He had taken on Him the punishment due to our sins. For what is that punishment ? From the very beginning, it was Death. “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” And death, when we consider it, what is it ? In what does it consist ? We know what the first death means, the death of the body, temporal death. It is the separation of the soul from the body. What then is the second death, the death of the soul, eternal death ? What but the separation of the soul from God ? God is the life of the soul ; and to be forsaken of Him is the death of the soul. This is the deserved and foretold punishment of sin ; he who is guilty of it must surely die : that soul must be cut off from God. Wherefore Jesus Christ, our Priest and Surety, having undertaken to suffer what we deserved, was to suffer, for that short

time, the very death of the soul, separation from God. He bore it as our Priest: as our Priest He cried out, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" This was His Desolation, His first and chief punishment: from this all the rest flowed, and on this they depended: and accordingly this is put first in the prophecy of His Passion.

"Look upon Me; why hast Thou forsaken Me, and art so far from My health, and from the words of My complaint?" Here the Eternal and Only-Begotten, the Only-Beloved of the Father, vouchsafes to complain of not being heard in His prayers. He has made Himself even as one of us sinners, to labour, seemingly at least, in vain; to spend His breath for nought and in vain: to be left alone, friendless and helpless, in the world; to cry out, and not be heard; to call, and find no answer. They of His acquaintance have departed from Him; His eleven disciples, who had seemed so long faithful, even they at last have forsaken Him and fled. In a very short time the few lovers and friends, who still remain beneath His Cross, His holy Mother, His beloved disciple, and the rest, they too will be put away from Him; He will be in the dark and silent grave, and all His acquaintance out of His sight. In such sad trials, the saints and holy men of old had their refuge and their comfort, though not upon this earth. They could turn their thoughts and their prayers to a Home and a Helper far away, which yet they assuredly knew to be theirs: a Friend on their side, by Whose secret aid they were assured that they who were with them were far more than they who were against them. They could and did pray; and their

prayer, sooner or later, they knew, was heard. But now the Blessed Jesus on the Cross cries to His Father and perceives no answer at all. He prays, He cries without ceasing: but His pangs continue without ceasing also, His pangs both of body and soul. "O My God, I cry in the day-time, but Thou hearest not, and in the night season also I take no rest." In the day-time our Lord hung on the Cross, in the night-season He knelt in His Agony, and His Sweat brake out in great drops of Blood. But as His day was without help or relief, so was His night without rest. Behold here, as in every thing else, the infinite love of our suffering God and Saviour: how He takes on Himself for a time that unspeakable torment of restlessness, which is to be the lot of such as are lost for ever. Of them it is said, "they have no rest day nor night;" and here the same is said of our gracious Lord on the Cross. O how can we ever love Him or thank Him, glorify or serve Him enough, Him Who, for us His enemies, was content to be forsaken of His Father, and to bear for the time our burthen, our deserved portion, desolation and restlessness, even like that of condemned spirits!

And in the third verse all this misery would seem to be made yet more miserable, by being set against the unchangeable glory of heaven. "Thou continuest Holy, O Thou Worship of Israel." The Righteous, the Everlasting Father, Whom all the Saints and Angels from the beginning worship, He sits on His Throne in Heaven, in His own Glory and Blessedness, His own happiness and tranquillity, while His Incarnate Son is suffering. Yea, even at that very time, by an inconceivable mystery of love

and power, the Son Himself continued, He could not cease to be, One with the Father and the Holy Ghost: only He withdrew, if we may so speak, the beams of His Godhead, for the time, from His suffering Manhood. A cloud passed over His Human Soul and Body, until the dreadful Sacrifice was over: and so long, we may well believe, the memory and knowledge of heavenly joy which He had, caused the present darkness and separation from His Father, to be more deeply and mournfully felt.

And another thought here set down, as part of His distress, is this: "Our fathers hoped in Thee, they trusted in Thee, and Thou didst deliver them: they called upon Thee and were holpen, they put their trust in Thee and were not confounded." The Patriarchs and Prophets of old, Noah, Job, and Daniel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, David, Elijah and the rest, these all, in their several times and troubles, called upon God, and were not rejected. Even if they were kept waiting, their deliverance came in due time; and they were all along permitted to have a comfortable hope of it. But He, the Creator and Redeemer of them all, He by Whose Spirit alone they were comforted, He prays silently and intensely through all those hours of agony, and no relief, no comfortable answer is vouchsafed. It is still, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? until the actual moment of His Death: when, for the last act of His Sacrifice, He commends His Spirit into His Father's Hands.

And now, what are we to think, my brethren, of that which brought such desolation on Him Who is our only Hope, our only sure Friend in time and in

Eternity, our Healer, our Saviour, and our God? How grievous, how hateful to Almighty God must *that* have been and for ever be, which caused the Eternal Father to hide His Face from the Incarnate Son, which made the Blessed Jesus Himself hang desolate upon His Cross, and refuse to feel the Divine joy and strength which could not but be His own for ever and ever. We know well what it was, which did all this. It was sin. Our sin, laid on that Lamb of God, brought Him to that unspeakable desolation. Do we then hate sin, as those who love Him should do? Do we fear for ourselves that misery, which the Cross shews us in Him? Separation from God, the death of the very soul? Have we begun in good earnest to hate and fear our own sins? to confess them heartily, one by one; to punish ourselves for them; to be patient when we are punished; to withdraw ourselves carefully from whatever will lead us to them? Except we have signs like these to shew, we may imagine we have faith, but it will do us no good: we may feel, for the time, touched with our Lord's Sufferings, but it will pass away, and leave us harder than ever. This way then, my brethren, let us turn all our strength, to fight against these our bosom-enemies, the true cause of our Saviour's pain and death. Let us pity Him in His desolation and agony: let us pity our own souls, so precious in His sight, and secure to them in time, by true faith and repentance, the blessing which He then intended us. For we were then in His thoughts, every one of us. He was content to be forsaken of God for a time, lest we and ours should be forsaken to all Eternity.

SERMON XLIII.

TWENTY-SECOND PSALM. II.

SCORN AND HATRED.

TUESDAY.

VERSES 6—13.

IN the first five verses of this Psalm, as I shewed yesterday, our Lord complains of His desolation : of the Presence of His Father, and of His own Godhead, clouded over, and seeming withdrawn for a time. Such being the case, He was left, if one may so speak, open and at leisure to feel all the human miseries, which came so thick around Him in those sad hours of His Passion. The scorn and hatred of men, the fierce pains of crucifixion, the pangs of death, were free to make themselves felt indeed, to do all their work in His Soul and Body, when the heavenly comfort and support was withdrawn.

And in the first place, He bids us consider how deeply His meek Spirit felt the scorn and reproach of that hour. "As for Me, I am a worm, and no man; a very scorn of men and the outcast of the people." A worm, the most insignificant of beings, something which we tread upon as we go on our way; we trample and crush it to earth, and pass on quite unconcerned, just as if nothing had happened. It is the complaint of one suffering under the most un-

pitying oppression and haughtiness of man: when people hurry over them, making as if they did not see them, utterly careless what becomes of them. There is nothing which tender spirits feel more bitterly, not even positive cruelty and spite and malice. Yet, alas! how common is such behaviour, not only towards the poor afflicted members of Christ, but even towards Christ Himself! What can we say of ourselves, those many times that we have sinned with a high hand, going on determined and stubborn in things which we know Christ hates? What can we say of ourselves, but that we treated Him as a worm and no man? We made as though there were no such Being in the world; no Christ, no Saviour, no God! If we did not actually mean to torment and scorn Him, we at least went on utterly regardless of His pangs. How common is it for people to say, when they have been breaking some of God's plain commandments, or profanely neglecting His Service, "Indeed, I meant no such great harm, I never gave it a thought:" and so we let ourselves off easily: yet what is all this in reality, but saying, we counted Christ a worm and no man: we dealt with Him as if we need not care how we hurt, how we trampled upon Him?

As our dying Lord was thus haughtily neglected by the world in general, so those who were immediately around Him seemed as if they could not do enough in the way of positive scorn and mockery. He was "a very scorn of men;" despised and rejected by His creatures whom He came to save: and an "outcast of the people." The Jewish nation especially considered Him unworthy to be reckoned

among them. In the very beginning of His ministry the congregation of His own village Nazareth had forced Him out of their synagogue, and were going to cast Him down headlong, and all through those three years He had to endure contemptuous thoughts and sayings, particularly from the Scribes and Pharisees. They said He was a Samaritan and had a devil: they called Him “^athat deceiver,” that cheat and impostor: they cast scornfully out of the synagogue every one that was on His side. Thus it had been all along: and now on the Cross it broke out more grievously than ever. Priests and soldiers, Jews and heathens, seemed to try one against another, which could say the most bitter and contemptuous words. The soldiers mocking Him, and offering Him vinegar, and saying, Hail, King of the Jews: the Chief Priests, with the Scribes and Elders, using the very expressions which the Psalm had foretold. “All they that see Me, laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in God that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, if He will have Him.” All this the meek Lamb of God bears with perfect silence and patience, though it enters into His very Soul: though by one act of His Almighty Will, He might at once have swept them away; cast them into hell, or reduced them to nothing.

And the verses which next follow seem to signify, that His sense of this bitter usage was made yet sharper and sadder by the memory of past consolations. “But Thou art He that took Me out of My Mother’s womb: Thou wast My hope, when I hanged

^a S. Matt. xxvii. 63.

yet upon My Mother's breasts : I have been left unto Thee ever since I was born : Thou art My God, even from My Mother's womb." As in the former part of the Psalm, the Desolation had seemed more desolate, by reason of the Divine Glory, which He remembered, and which He knew was His by right; (for of this He speaks in the verse, "Thou continuest Holy, O Thou worship of Israel,") so here the scorn and tauntings of men are brought with a keener edge to His heart by the remembrance of His quiet home, poor though it were and despised, at Nazareth, and of His Virgin Mother's affectionate, adoring care. And He teaches us, how in like troubles we may reverently expostulate with God, putting Him in mind of His mercies in times past. "O go not from me, for trouble is hard at hand, and there is none to help." As though He should say, "By all Thy fatherly care and loving-kindness, shewn to Me all along, from the first moment of My being born into the world, I beseech Thee, have mercy upon Me." And here by the way we may see the difference between our compassionate God and our hard-hearted selves. We, too often, if we have done a little for some afflicted person, think it hard to be entreated to do more : but He teaches us to come to Him and plead His past mercies as a reason why He should bestow on us yet more.

But now, what is this trouble, over and above the scorn and reproach, which He had before complained of,—this trouble so hard at hand? It is hate and malice, rushing on Him like a flood, and surrounding Him with their fiercest waves. While nearly all the world scorned and rejected Him, those who were nearest to Him, and for the time were permit-

ted to have Him in their power, do their very worst to torture Him in every limb. He sees them all around Him: His hands are tied: His Love for us has made Him weak and helpless, that He cannot escape or resist them: and there is no one near, to give Him help, or effectually to care for His Soul. Hear and know by His own words, how He felt in that moment. "Many oxen are come about Me, fat bulls of Basan close Me in on every side." The Son of God in the midst of those cruel soldiers is as a friendless, unprotected child, who has fallen among a herd of wild cattle. We know, from our own feelings as children, how dreadful this must have been to endure: for I suppose that to most children there is no imagination more horrible, than to fancy themselves surrounded by angry horned cattle, and lying quite at their mercy. Think then earnestly, bring it home to your hearts, of your God and Saviour lying down on the Cross, amid these raging heathen soldiers, rude, un pitying, heavy-handed, hard-hearted men, whose delight it is to put forth all their strength in causing as much pain as possible. See how they lift up their heavy hammers, and prepare to force the nails through His tender limbs, deep into the wood of the Cross: imagine what your feelings would be in such a case, and let those who are fathers or mothers imagine what His Mother must have felt, when she stood by, as in all likelihood she did, and beheld their cruelty, without the least power to help.

And yet there is something, in the way of hate and malice, still worse than all this. For all this is but the brutal fierceness of men: but our Lord was aware, besides all this, of enemies out of sight, but

close to Him at that moment on every side : spiritual enemies, of a keener and deeper malice than either Jew or heathen could feel : for indeed the Jews and heathens only learned of them to hate Him. Christ had said to those who first took Him, when His Passion was beginning, "This is your hour, and the Power of darkness;" and there can be no doubt, that the Evil one was busy round His Cross, both in suggesting cruel and wicked behaviour to the soldiers and bystanders, and in other ways vexing that pure Soul and Body, which he knew it was useless to tempt. Our Lord's next words in the Psalm may allude to this; "They gaped upon Me with their mouths, as it were a ramping and a roaring lion." The enemies of Christ stood round Him as it were open-mouthed, ready, if they might, even to devour Him : full of such spite and rage as they had learned from him who is the author of all malice, the roaring lion, who walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Who can tell how much might be added to the pangs of our Divine Master by the presence of these unseen enemies, now in their own hour, and while the Light of the Father's Countenance, and the Beams of His proper Godhead, were for a time, by His own consent, withdrawn?

And now the Psalm has brought the Almighty Sufferer to the very point of offering up His Sacrifice : offering His own Soul and Body on the Cross. There we will leave Him for the present, purposing to return to-morrow to the consideration of His pain and death. But let us keep in our hearts the remembrance, what scorn and hate He endured, and that it was all for our sake. He endured scorn and

hate, the very worst and bitterest of both, that we might be forgiven our contemptuous scornful words and looks, our thoughts and imaginations so poisoned with malice and hatred. The proud and the cruel had their own way with our Lord, that we, looking to His Cross, might see what shocking passions scorn and hate are, and might be ashamed ever to indulge them any more. Again, He bore to be an "outcast of the people," mocked and derided of all, every one striving with another, which could torment Him most: that we might patiently bear scorn and hate, the contradiction of sinners against us. May it please Him to write both lessons by His Good Spirit in our hearts!

SERMON XLIV.

TWENTY-SECOND PSALM. III.

BODILY WEAKNESS, PAIN AND DEATH.

WEDNESDAY.

VERSES 14-18.

THE third portion of this Psalm describes the state of outward misery and torture, to which our Lord, forsaken for the time by the comfortable Presence of the Father, was content to be brought down by the scorn and hate of His enemies. And it is remarkable that, in describing it, as in other mournful Psalms, He vouchsafes to use the same kind of sayings as persons in grievous diseases. We find by constant experience in sick-rooms, what power people have, in painful disorders especially, to describe their own sufferings in choice, plain, earnest words. And the book of Job is full of instances of it. There, and in such Psalms as this, the Holy Spirit has graciously condescended to speak in the tone and manner of persons when in sickness; thereby assuring us, more and more, of our Lord's deep feeling for our infirmities.

Thus, in the verse we are now come to, "I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart also in the midst of My body is even like melting wax: My strength also is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaveth to My gums."

Who does not at once perceive, in such complaints as these, the very expressions and ways of thought which sick persons are accustomed to employ, when they want to convey to others some true notion of their distress, and to get themselves pitied as they naturally desire to be? How often do we hear them say, they are weak as water, they are ready to melt away, by way of telling you of their utter and entire weakness! But here *He* says the same, Who is the very Rock of ages, the Head and Source of all might and power: in Whose Hand are all the corners of the earth, and the strength of the hills is His also. Here the Almighty One says, "I am altogether dissolved through weakness, I am as water that runneth apace." And why is He brought so low? It is to atone for the many sins which we have committed in abuse of the strength which He has given: it is because we have too often employed these limbs and bodies of ours in the work of His enemy, in cruelty and mischief; or have weakened them by riot, and excess: or have haughtily put our trust in them, as did Goliath and those other giants of old. We have ill-used the strength which God gave us, and now God hath bowed Himself down to an inconceivable extremity of weakness, that we might be forgiven, and do so no more. Let those mark it well, who are tempted to go wrong by the high spirits of youth and health; by the feeling of strength in body, and courage of mind. Let them not think much to refrain themselves and keep their wild passions in order, now that they see to what they have brought their Saviour.

But weakness and faintness, from want and loss

of blood, was only the beginning of His bodily affliction. It has now added to it the most intense and torturing pain. "All My bones are out of joint." Our Saviour's sacred limbs, we may believe, were so violently strained and pulled, in order to fasten Him to the Cross, that it was like being on the rack; every bone was more or less dislocated. And hanging, as He did, on the nails for more than three hours, the weight of His Body, still bearing Him downwards, would force everything still more and more out of place. How little do we think, my brethren, while God gives us the use of our bodies, our joints and limbs, entire and in their places; how little do we think of the dear rate, at which this favour was purchased for us! Sinners as we are, and deserving long ago to have been cast into the place of torment, why and how can the righteous Judge still bear with us? Why, and how, are we allowed a moment's ease? Why, and how, but through this our suffering High Priest; and for the sake of the pangs which He so meekly endured? Try and enter into this thought: when you feel the comfort of bodily ease yourselves, or of seeing those dearest to you, how they thrive, how they grow up as the young plants, use yourself now and then to recollect, what a price was paid, that you might be so favoured, that your children might sleep on in such healthy rest. The Son of God, in sight of His Blessed Mother, gave Himself up to be racked and strained on that painful bed of the Cross, until all His bones were out of joint. *That* was the cost, the purchase of your and your children's ease and comfort.

Next, our Lord describes the inward sensations,

the drought, fever, exhaustion, extreme commotion, and final sinking, which the torture of His limbs brought on. "My heart in the midst of My body is even like melting wax: My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaveth to My gums, and Thou shalt bring Me into the dust of death." His heart, the fountain of His bodily life, seemed all melting away, like wax before the fire; the very punishment, which, another Psalm^a tells us, the wicked must expect from the nearer Presence of God, and therefore willingly borne by Him Who, for love's sake, was there making Himself as the worst of the wicked. It was as though there were an inward burning fire in His Bosom, consuming all that it found there with excessive pain. And with it came a most sorrowful sense of dryness and exhaustion. "My strength is dried up like a potsherd." A potsherd, or piece of a broken earthen vessel, is the very thing which in the Old Testament is used continually to represent that which is meanest, most insignificant, most utterly without use or value in the sight of God and man. Our Lord then seems to say, that He had that feeling, ordinary in weakening sickness, of being entirely parched, withered, exhausted, fit only to be broken in pieces and cast away.

He complains also of excessive thirst, such feverish thirst, as ordinarily comes on, when persons are near their end by a violent but lingering death. "My tongue cleaveth to My gums." We know how this was fulfilled, when the very moment of His giving up the Ghost was near at hand. His Sacrifice, in all

^a Ps. lxxviii. 2.

other parts, being fulfilled, our dying Lord exclaimed, "I thirst:" and they in mockery gave Him vinegar to drink. By this dying thirst He expiated the many grievous sins we have committed through luxury in meat and drink; not keeping our bodies in temperance and soberness, not possessing our souls in patience, when our diet was other than we could have wished. Then whereas in the Psalm He adds, "Thou shalt bring Me into the dust of death," we know that immediately on receiving the vinegar, after one more loud cry to His Father, He bowed His Head, and gave up the Ghost. He bowed His sacred and innocent Head to receive the sentence appointed in the beginning for sinners; "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." He had made Himself dust by taking on Him a Body of the substance of His Virgin Mother, who, however blessed, was a child of Adam as all others. And now He returned to dust (though but for a few hours) His Divine Soul really taking leave of His Body, so that it was ready to be laid in Joseph's new tomb, as any other dead body might be. As we contemplate our Almighty Redeemer in that astonishing moment, let us, in our secret hearts, submit ourselves to the sentence of our own death, whenever it may come; owning it most righteous, and only praying that, as *for* us He went down into the dust of death, so He, by His Spirit, would go down with us, that we may not even then cease to be members of Him. Let the thought of Jesus dying reconcile us to the thought of our own death, and of our friends' death also: calming our hearts to bear all things.

But the Psalm does not simply say He was to die :

it proceeds also to describe more minutely the manner of His death, "Many dogs are come about Me: the council of the wicked layeth siege against Me." Here it seems to be prophesied that the murder of our Lord would at once be tumultuous and judicial: and it was tumultuous, in that the people, like many dogs, came around Him with a great uproar, "Crucify Him, crucify Him;" yet was it also judicial, or in seeming course of law, inasmuch as the Chief Priests and Rulers—the Council of the wicked, first tried Jesus themselves, and then brought Him before Pilate to be tried. Then they pierced His Hands and His Feet; i. e. they nailed Him to the Cross: one by one they drove the cruel nails quite through those parts of His Body, where the pain would perhaps be greatest and most lingering, so many nerves sinews and veins there meeting together. And so He made atonement especially for our evil deeds and evil ways: our hands reached out to all manner of mischief; our feet so swift to withdraw us from holy places, and to carry us where the Evil one would rather have us be. Then might He tell all His Bones; His worn and wearied Body, stripped and lifted up between earth and heaven, shewed every bone standing out, that it might be counted: and they, with no thought of pity, did but stand staring and looking upon Him: all but the four soldiers, who, having to act as executioners, were permitted to take His garments as a kind of perquisite: they, quite hardened to His agonies, employed themselves the while in making out four shares of the rest of His clothing; but, for His coat, because they could not well divide it, they cast lots under the Cross: ful-

filling the prophecy, and shewing us in figure, how the ordinary sort of persons in this evil world would behave, when brought by God's providence near the Cross. They are themselves, by their sins, among the crucifiers of Jesus Christ, yet they do not even take the trouble to look towards Him: they are so busy, parting His garments among them: trying which can get the most of those earthly things which He has put away from Him.

Let it not be so with us. Rather, like the relenting Centurion, though we cannot deny that we are among the murderers of Christ (for indeed our sins helped to nail Him to the Cross) let us own with all our hearts, "Truly this was a righteous man," the only Righteous Man, the Well-spring of Righteousness to all: "Truly this Man was the Son of God:" a true Son of Adam by His Mother: else how could He die as Adam died? but withal "the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten from everlasting of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten not made, of one Substance with the Father:" else how should His sacrificing Himself, and our partaking of Him, make us partakers of the Divine Nature? Let us watch Him earnestly, and all that He says and does, all the time that He hangs on the Cross: for, all the time, be sure, He is bearing us in mind. For pity's sake and for very shame's sake, let us not go back to the world and our sins, as though the Son of Man had not been lifted up in our sight!

SERMON XLV.

TWENTY-SECOND PSALM. IV.

RELIEF AND VICTORY.

THURSDAY.

VERSES 19—end.

WE are now come to the turning point, if one may so call it, in this Psalm: the point where distress ends, and relief begins: the point where prayer is turned into thanksgiving.

Just before our Lord gave up the Ghost, He uttered that verse of another Psalm, “^a Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit,” shewing that He ceased not to pray through the whole time of His desolation and agony: and so in the nineteenth verse of this psalm, having described at large the whole of His Passion, He follows up all with a prayer: “But be not Thou far from Me, O Lord: Thou art My succour: haste Thee to help Me: deliver My soul from the sword, My darling from the power of the dog: save Me from the lion’s mouth,” from the assaults of the devil. Our Lord made prayer His refuge in that sad extremity, for this reason among others, that *we* might make it our refuge. He prayed upon the Cross, to make us understand, that no deep of misery or desolation of soul or body, to which we may find ourselves reduced, need ever hinder our prayers, so long as we are in

^a Ps. xxxi. 6.

this world of trial. "While there is life," the proverb says, "there is hope," because there is prayer: prayer in His Name, "^bWho in the days of His flesh," ceased not to offer up "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared."

He was heard, and relief came first, and then victory. His pains ceased, and His enemies were put down. And this at the very instant of His death; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The change comes suddenly, in the middle of a verse, like a turn in music from a mournful to a joyous strain. "Save Me from the lion's mouth:" with that word, prayer ends: the next is a word of thanksgiving; "Thou hast heard Me also from among the horns of the unicorns." From His place on the very Cross, the arms of which are likened to horns lifted up, the Father has heard Him: the Sacrifice is accepted; sin, death and hell are overcome: and now it only remains for Him to take to Him His great power, and reign, both outwardly in heaven and earth, and inwardly in the hearts of His people.

In the next verse, that kingdom begins. "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." Christ's brethren are the children of men, saved by His making Himself one of them: and especially His disciples, to whom, first after His Resurrection, He sent the message, "Go, tell My brethren that they go before Me into Galilee, there shall they see Me." That was the beginning of the preaching of Christ risen to those

^b Heb. v. 7.

who were afterwards to be His Church. Thenceforward He went on declaring His Father's Name to His brethren: teaching, for forty days, the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And it was to be set up among the Jews first: which the Psalm goes on to prophesy. "O praise the Lord, ye that fear Him: magnify Him, all ye of the seed of Jacob, and fear Him, all ye seed of Israel." We see it accomplished in the Acts of the Apostles, when S. Peter on the Day of Pentecost preached the Gospel to the Jews first. And what was the Gospel? That God hath not despised nor abhorred the low estate of the meek: that Christ crucified is lifted up above all principalities and powers; that such as humbly take up their cross and follow Him, shall be exalted to reign with Him in heaven. The Father hath not hid His Face from the Son, nor from those who pray in the Son's Name: but when they call unto Him, He hears them. That is one great blessing which Christ's Death has purchased for His Church: that, when she prays in His Name, she shall be heard. Another is, what is promised in the next verse; "My praise is of Thee in the great congregation; my vows will I perform in the sight of them that fear Him." The members of Christ and children of God shall be endowed with grace and strength to perform their vows; the Holy Spirit, given in Baptism, will sanctify them and make them like Christ their Head. And then "the poor shall eat and be satisfied," the meek and lowly, the contrite and obedient will receive Christ from time to time in the Feast of the Holy Communion, that Feast which He first ordained on this very Thursday in Holy Week, eighteen hundred

years ago. "The poor shall eat and be satisfied:" the meek-hearted shall partake of their Lord's own Body and Blood, and it shall be eternal life to them; their "heart shall live for ever."

Then the Psalm goes on to offer all these blessings to every nation under heaven, not limiting them, as in a former verse, to the seed of Jacob and Israel only. "All the ends of the world shall remember themselves and be turned unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the Governor among the people." Christ is Lord and King, on His Throne in heaven, over the whole Church in all the world. His crown of thorns hath now proved the token of an everlasting kingdom. All other kings and nobles, "all such as be fat upon earth," the rich and great ones, such as Cæsar and they of his household, all these have eaten and worshipped. The great Roman Empire and its Governors have become Christian; they have bowed themselves humbly down to receive the tokens of the Lord's Body and Blood. And not only they, but all those who go down into the dust, all the children of Adam, all those on whom the original sentence was passed, "thou shalt return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken;" all these shall kneel before Him. At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow. Sooner or later, with or against their own will, the whole family of man shall confess *Him* Lord, Who was born of a virgin, and died upon the Cross. Henceforth He is ruler over the living and the dead. He is their Ruler, for He is their Saviour. "No man hath quickened his own soul." No man can save himself, no

man can restore his own dead body to life, nor raise up his own dead soul from the death of sin. Christ only can do this. He is the only Quickener of our souls, for He quickened His own Soul. He alone had power to lay down His life, and had power to take it again.

In ourselves, we are nothing : nothing but miserable sinners, frail bodies and corrupt souls. But in Christ, Whose members we are, we are children of God. Hear the last verse but one of the Psalm. "My seed shall serve Him ; they shall be counted unto the Lord for a generation." God will reckon them His own especial Family. "They shall come," each in his appointed time ; generation after generation of Christian people shall spring up, and shall declare His righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, each one to the following generation, unto a people that shall be born, whom the Lord hath made. The father to the children shall make known God's Truth. The Cross lifted up to-day shall never be forgotten, never pass out of knowledge. Its teaching and preaching shall never cease to be heard. Henceforth all the world shall be gathered around it, either as obedient believers, or as rebels and enemies. We ourselves, here in this place, are witnesses to this awful prophecy. We are part of His spiritual seed, made such by Holy Baptism : and His Righteousness hath been declared to us. We are gathered here under the shadow of His Cross. The awful services of this Holy Week seem in a peculiar way to bring Him very near us, with all His Wounds, His agonies, His dying Words. We cannot choose but stand under the Cross : only (and this is the most fearful thought

of all) we may choose in what sort of mind we will take our station there. There are His murderers and mockers ; there are also His holy Mother with her friends, and His beloved disciple. On which side will you be? To which party will you join yourself? In a few days He will offer Himself to you, His very Body and Blood, to be your Life. Will you turn away from it like the unbelieving Jews? Or will you come to it profanely like Judas? Or will you receive it like S. Peter and the rest, with a true penitent and affectionate heart, although it may be, with a doubting mind? One of these courses you must take. May He, Who died for you put it in your hearts to take and choose the only right one !

SERMON XLVI.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE PASSION.

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

PALM SUNDAY.

S. JOHN iii. 16.

“God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-Begotten Son, that, whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

AMONG the manifold meanings of our Lord's Prayer, it may be used, every word of it, with especial reference to His Death and Passion. I mean, that as we say it in our devotions, we may sometimes, if we will, pause after each portion of it, to consider and recollect, how it seems to suit with the great things which He did and suffered for us, now at this solemn time of His great Sacrifice. We may try, in such measure as we can, to understand the Lord's Prayer, as they understood it, who said it beside our Saviour's Cross. For since our Lord had expressly told His disciples, whenever they prayed, to use that prayer, we cannot doubt that they did use it, that it made a very chief part in all their devotions. And if they said it at other times, of course we may think that they must have said it more than once during that time of unspeakable fear and trouble: while they

were waiting to know what would become of their dear Lord, now in the hands of His cruel enemies: while they watched His Sufferings, fast following one upon another, and each new one worse than the last. As the Passion went on, and they were more at their wits' end (if I may say so) with grief, and horror, and astonishment: as their own words and thoughts failed them more and more in their endeavours to lift up their hearts to Him Who alone could deliver, may we not well imagine them taking refuge, as it were, in the Prayer of our Lord: repeating it over and over, and trusting and hoping that God might hear it, not according to their human understanding, now made weaker than ever by the overpowering calamity, but according to its proper and full meaning, as He and His Father intended it from the beginning? We may imagine how S. John, for example, would repeat the Lord's Prayer to himself, as he stood by the Cross of Jesus, and the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of Jesus, with him. What sort of thoughts and feelings might arise in his mind, when at such a time he began to say in his heart, "Our Father which art in Heaven?" (For I shall speak only of those words to-day; intending, if I may, on each following day of this week, to go on saying something in like manner of the following parts of the Prayer; so that for the six petitions of it we may take the six days of the Holy Week, and on Easter Day be ready with all our hearts to join in the Doxology, the giving of Glory, in the conclusion.)

As I said then, we are now to consider what thoughts a dutiful and loving heart may well join, during the Holy Week, with the first words of our

Lord's Prayer, "Our Father, which art in Heaven." And here our Saviour vouchsafes Himself to instruct us. Observe the very first words, so far as the Gospels tell us, in which He spoke of the great purpose, for which He came down from Heaven. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Or, as the collect for this day expresses it: "The Almighty and Everlasting God, of His tender love towards mankind, sent His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross." The best and surest token of love is self-denial. He loves much, who gives up a great deal for love's sake. Think what a mother's love is, how she gives herself up night and day, to wait upon her beloved child: how she counts nothing too precious to part with, no call too pressing to interrupt, when the good, and health, and comfort, of her little one is concerned. Willingly and gladly will a fond parent lay down his life, and that, in the bitterest of torments, to save his child. Why? Because he truly loves him, with a "love, stronger than death." That love is not his own; he did not put it into his own heart. It comes to him from the Fountain of all Love; from the Most High God, Who is Love. Fathers and mothers love their children, because He puts it in their hearts to do so. And the proof of their love, as I said, is their denying and punishing themselves, and putting themselves out of the way, for their beloved's sake.

But what is all the love of the tenderest earthly parent, to the love of God the Father for us His sinful children? What is all that a father or mother can

or ever could give up, compared with this great thing: that the Eternal Father gave up His Only-Begotten Son, parted with Him, if I may so speak, out of His Bosom, and submitted Him, as Man, to that unspeakable depth of suffering, to save and recover us from eternal death; us sinners, who had turned our backs upon Him, and had made ourselves followers and slaves of His great enemy? Who can think or speak worthily of this love? Who would dare think or speak of it at all, if Holy Scripture had not shewed him the way? But He has vouchsafed there to set before us the example of a human father, a most loving father, sacrificing his only son. He has taught us to see in Abraham, the father of the faithful, as in a glass darkly, a sort of parable of His love in sending His Son to redeem us. For Isaac is called the only-begotten son of Abraham, as our Lord is the Only-Begotten Son of God. And as Abraham took a long journey, the end of which he knew would be the offering up of his son, so the Almighty Father, from the beginning of the world, ordered all with a view to the awful Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross. As Abraham, through faith, overcame the feelings of nature, and went on in fulfilment of God's command, even until the last moment, when, having bound Isaac his son and laid him on the wood upon the altar, he had to stretch forth his hand, and take up the knife to slay his son: so the Eternal and most loving Father of our Lord Jesus Christ spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all: delivered Him up to agony, to bonds, to reproach, to stripes, to the burthen and torment of the Cross, and last of all to the death which we had deserved. There

was the difference: Abraham was stayed, when he had lifted up the knife; an Angel cried from heaven, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad," but no voice came from heaven to stay the sufferings of Jesus Christ. His enemies were permitted to have their way, to do all their worst against Him. It was their hour, and the power of darkness. Isaac was delivered; but our Lord endured unto the end. He was offered, for so He willed, and His Father willed it also. He would not let His servants fight for Him: He would not call down, as He might by one prayer, more than twelve legions of Angels: He would not come down from the Cross, when He was dared to do so. As He had loved His own which were in the world, He loved them, and endured for them, to the end. He surrendered His whole Body, and poured out His whole Soul, unto a most cruel and shameful death for us. Isaac went down to death, and rose again, in figure only: Jesus Christ really died and rose again. The Father seemed for the time to leave Him.

Think, my brethren, of this awful circumstance, how God the Father did, as it were, hide and withdraw Himself all through the Passion of our Lord: how, being present, He seemed to take no notice. Consider the Blessed Son first in His Agony; behold Him in that lonely Garden, the few friends whom He had, sleeping for sorrow; now kneeling, now falling prostrate, with strong crying and tears, offering up supplications and prayers to Him that was able to save Him from death: saying three times over, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me:" and yet not seeming to be heard: the Cup still held out for Him to drink, only an Angel

appearing to strengthen Him. Consider this well. Do you not perceive in it, how it pleases our God very often to be present in the sufferings of His servants without interfering to deliver them? You lie on the bed of sickness; you watch by the bed of some dear friend; it breaks your heart to see him in pain and danger. You say your prayers for him more and more earnestly; you cry mightily unto God, and no notice appears to be taken, no answer to be vouchsafed: and the feeling perhaps comes over you which crossed the Psalmist's mind in a like trial. "a Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and will He shut up His loving-kindness in displeasure? Is His mercy clean gone for ever, and His promise come utterly to an end for evermore?" How refreshing at such moments to recollect our Lord in His Agony! His Father, we are sure, could not leave Him alone, yet during those moments He seemed to be left alone. Let us not mind it too much, if we too at times are tried by sore feelings of desolation. It does not follow that we are forgotten: far from it. Endure and pray on, with perseverance and patience, and an Angel, some divine comfort, will soon shew itself from heaven to strengthen you. In any case, despair not, but seriously reflect on this one thing: If the Son of God was allowed to feel, for a time, forlorn and desolate, how should sinners venture to expect continual support?

Think now of what happened next: the meek and innocent Lamb of God is beset by ravening wolves. Christ is seized and bound and dragged away to be tried by His enemies, suffering all sorts of indignities

^a Ps. lxxvii. 9. 8.

on the way. And the Father looks on: the just God permits this rude and cruel treatment, and seems to hide away His Face, as though He would not see it. And it is the same all through His trial, both before the High Priest, and before Pilate. What cruelty, what injustice, what cowardly unkindness on their part! What meek submission on His! What silence and reserve on the Father's! O who can think of it, and not think also with trembling, that the same God is even now present at all the unjust, un pitying, hypocritical deeds, which are done any where under the sun, more especially among Christians? From behind His cloud, He sees all: His arm is lifted up, though as yet He delays to strike. Then let us never dare to do any wrong, presuming on His forbearance; nor to be impatient of suffering wrong, as though He neglected us. Abide His time, and He will make your cause good.

But suppose now the trial over. What is this which comes next? Our Saviour is scourged: the great King of Angels and men is tied to a pillar, and cruel stripes are laid on Him. Now we know how hard it is to affectionate parents, when their children are severely punished, be the punishment never so just: how apt they are to interfere, and try to get them off: and yet here is that Father, from Whom all parental love comes, quietly waiting and looking on while they are mocking and insulting His own Son, Whom He would have all men honour, as they honour Himself. He waits and looks on: they go on from bad to worse: they crown Him with thorns; they spit in His Face; they smite Him on the Head with a reed; they weary themselves with reproaching and hurting Him. He

gives His Back to the smiters, and His Cheeks to them that pluck off the hair, He hides not His Face from shame and spitting. Does the Father then stand by unmoved, while the Son suffers such things? Nay, He is there, and the Son knows it, and the knowledge makes Him strong and patient. “^bThe Lord God will help Me;” He says, “therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

But now we are come to the last sad scene of all. God the Son is actually nailed to the Cross: and no thunderbolt falls from heaven; there are fearful sights indeed and signs; the sun darkened, and the veil of the Temple rent; the earth quaking and the graves opened; yet the sufferings of the Son go on even to the last moment, and in the end He gives up the Ghost; no mighty Hand is reached out to save Him from that. How He felt during part at least of that most wonderful time, He Himself declared, crying out in the words of the Psalm, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” In some sense or other, it seemed for the time as though the Father had given Him up. And so indeed He *had* done: He freely gave Him up for us all: He gave, He parted with His Only-Begotten Son. Herein is love indeed; that He *gave* “^cHis Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” He would not deliver Him, neither would the Son be delivered; because it had been in a manner agreed between the Father and the Son, that He really should suffer a real and bitter death for our sake. As if in some great and good family, the father and eldest son should contrive together how the son, at some

^b Isa. 1. 7.

^c 1 S. John iv. 10.

great loss to himself, should bring about some unspeakable good to the rest of the family, and the father accordingly, when the time came, should permit him to suffer, all men wondering.

Christian brethren, what shall we say, what can we say or do to our great Father which is in Heaven, to acknowledge worthily this unspeakable Gift of His Only-Begotten Son? Behold, He has, in a manner, preferred us, each one of us, to His very Son, Christ Jesus: seeing He gives Christ up, in a certain sense, to win and keep us. Well then, if He counts us so precious, that for us He sacrifices His Son, shall we count Him so vile, that we give Him up for any sinful fancy, any worldly trifle, which has taken our foolish hearts? Now is Christ lifted up on the Cross, visibly set forth, as it were, crucified among us. Here is also the Eternal Father, invisibly watching to see, how we are minded to behave to this good Saviour, Whom He will not save nor relieve, because He would have us redeemed by those Sufferings. O may we answer in some real way to this His miraculous mercy! May we never cease to believe in Him, with that living faith which shall keep us from perishing, and cause us to inherit everlasting life! May we never lose our place in the Holy Family, purchased for us by the Blood of the Cross; to be dutiful children of our Father which is in Heaven, and such as the Only-Begotten Son is not ashamed to call brethren!

SERMON XLVII.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE PASSION.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

As our Blessed Lord, in His whole behaviour, during this time of His Passion, shewed how full His Divine Soul was of His Father and our Father in Heaven; so did He, from beginning to end, hallow and glorify God's Holy Name. As in life, so especially in death, it pleased Him to act out, as it were, His own Prayer: to set us a pattern, how we should live and die, who, by His command, say that prayer continually. We are to consider that pattern now, with reference especially to the first petition in the Prayer: "Hallowed be Thy Name." It is the first thing He bade us ask of God, every time we pray to Him. Well therefore may we expect to find a great deal of it in this awful season, when He did and endured such inconceivable things, not only to redeem us, but to give us perfect instruction, how we should pray and live.

And accordingly we read in the twelfth chapter of S. John, that our Lord in the very beginning of this Holy Week, did, as it were, solemnly give Himself up

to the glory of His Father's Name. That was the day, on which He had publicly entered into Jerusalem, thereby setting Himself apart, as the Paschal Lamb was set apart during that very day, to be sacrificed on the Friday. "aThe hour is come," He said, "that the Son of man should be glorified." And then, having not darkly foretold His own death, He fell into an inward trouble, an agony of soul, somewhat like that which He endured afterwards in the Garden. "bNow is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour;" the Eternal purpose, by which He had devoted Himself before the world was, was to die on the Cross for us. For all the pain and natural shrinking of the flesh, the human will was still entirely the obedient servant of the Divine Will; and the end of the agony is: "Father, glorify thy Name." "Let all be done in such sort, as is most for Thy honour and glory. Though it be agony, betrayal, chains, insults, false accusations, scourging, tortures, the bitterest of death, I embrace it with all my heart, O My Father, as I have done from the beginning, because it is for the glory of Thy Name." Thus He devoted Himself, as a whole-burnt-offering, keeping back no part of His Human Nature. Every part and power both of soul and body, He devoted entire to suffer whatever His Father might lay on Him, as due to our sins, in His approaching Passion. It was a whole-burnt-offering: and as in former days, when such sacrifices were laid entire on His Altar, God was used to signify His acceptance of them, by fire coming down from heaven, so now the Father

a S. John xii. 23.

b Ib. 27.

gave this awful token in reply to the Son's Prayer, "cI have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." It was one of three times only, during Christ's abode on earth, that the Voice of God the Father was heard among men. And well may we understand it as signifying Almighty God's gracious Will to take always in good part, for His Son's Sake, whatever we do sincerely, to hallow, and glorify and honour His Holy Name. As it is the first thing, the key-note as it were of our Lord's Passion, and of all our prayers, so let it be the mainspring of all our doings and all our sufferings. Seek we first our Father's glory, "the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and all other things, He has promised, shall without fail be added unto us, according to our need.

Observe next, that our Saviour did not wax weary, as we are apt to tire of our good and self-denying beginnings. The spirit of sacrifice continued in Him to the end. He never, for one moment, ceased to look to His Father's glory. All was done and suffered in His Name, that is, by His Will, and as by the Person, through Whom He would manifest Himself. Thus, from time to time, during His Passion, we find our Lord appealing to the prophecies, and giving this reason, why such and such things must take place; that they were foretold, and for the truth of God's sake, He, the Son of God, would take care that they came to pass. "This is your hour," He says: "the hour is come:" "this, that is written must yet be accomplished in Me:" "dHow then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

c S. John xii. 28.

d S. Matt. xxvi. 54.

And S. John tells us, that the reason why He cried out, "I thirst," when He was just at the point of death, was, "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." In other words, that His Father's Name might be glorified by the exact fulfilment of all that He had foretold. All was done precisely and accurately, at the very time and in the very manner, which had been settled long before, as tending most to the honour and glory of God. His enemies, the Evil spirits in the first place, and under them the cruel Jews and Romans, while they thought of nothing but their own selfish purposes, were, in fact, doing all they could for the furtherance of God's eternal purpose. And we, my brethren, whom He is now calling, this year as in former years, to stand or kneel beside Him in His deep humiliation: have we nothing particular to learn and practise, in the way of hallowing God's Name, from what we see here? Yes, surely! We have to learn this greatest and most vital of all lessons; that we ourselves, as parts and members of Christ, are bound to hallow God's Name as He did. That is, we too are to give ourselves up, as whole burnt-offerings, our whole souls and bodies, to do and suffer the whole will of our God. The Holy Name, which is called upon us and into which we were baptized, the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is to be the guide and spring of our whole life. In every thought, word, and act, our rule should be, to do, say, and think all in such manner as to credit and not disgrace, Him Who has so mercifully brought us so very near Himself. At the Name of Jesus "every knee should bow." The Father is glorified by the glorification of the Son: the more He suffers, the

worse they use Him, in their ignorance, so much the more should we who know Him to be our Saviour, come bending down to Him, and never be contented, but when we are doing somewhat in His service. Do they kneel to Him in mockery? Let us both kneel and bow the knee with all reverence and adoration of heart. Do they spit upon His Sacred Face? Let us wash His Feet with tears of penitence: let us grudge no good thing to the very poorest and meanest of His members. Do they crown Him with thorns? Let us crown Him king of our hearts, every day offering them up to Him, and vowing stricter obedience to Him. Do they strip and insult Him? Let us try to do something towards clothing the poor and naked, whom He reckons especially His: and let us, by charity, hide our brother's faults. Do they scourge Him? Let us by true repentance punish ourselves, and so comfort Him. Do they lay the Cross upon Him? Let us submit to our own cross. He will count it as though, like Simon, we were helping to support Him. Do they nail Him to the Cross? Let us by serious meditation very often separate ourselves from the worldly things which nature most closely binds us to, and unite ourselves to our suffering Saviour.

Now when I say, let us do these things, I wish to be understood as asking myself and you, how we have done all these things hitherto? Have we tried to do them at all? How is it that, if at all, they have been done so very imperfectly? And again I wish we would ask ourselves seriously, Do we really intend to honour Christ more than in times past; to do more credit to His Holy Name, by which we are

called; to pray with more reverence, both in Church and at home? to prepare ourselves better for the Holy Communion? Alas for our soul's condition, if we have no such thoughts! if now, in His own week, we are content to stand at a distance, and will not come unto Christ, that we may have life: will not hallow that Name, which is the only Name under Heaven given among men, whereby they may be saved!

SERMON XLVIII.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE PASSION.

THY KINGDOM COME.

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

THE Kingdom of God, of Christ, and of Heaven, is that glorious and happy condition, prepared from the beginning of the world for those who will accept of His love, graciously offering to deliver them from the sin and misery, in which they were born. And as this condition is not at once given in its perfection to all who shall partake of it, but is the work of many hundreds and thousands of years, beginning only in this world, but waiting to be completed in eternity: therefore the Kingdom of God, when spoken of in Scripture, has different meanings or shades of meaning, according as we consider the beginning, the middle, or the end of the great deliverance. Sometimes it means the end, the perfect happiness of heaven: and in this sense especially our Lord seems to speak of it, when He calls it ^a My Father's kingdom: saying, e. g. "^b Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Sometimes again the Kingdom of God means more especially the Body of Christ on earth: the

^a S. Matt. xxvi. 29.

^b Ib. xiii. 43.

company or society of His members, in which men are to be trained and prepared for heaven: as when it is likened to a field, in which tares and wheat grow together^c. Lastly, sometimes the kingdom of God means something within our hearts, i. e. our giving ourselves up entirely to be ordered by Him in thought, word, and deed: and so we read; “^dThe kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

But in whichever of these three meanings we speak of God's kingdom, the Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ is the foundation, the principal thing in it. Christ crucified is the keystone which holds all the building together. If by the kingdom of heaven we mean heaven itself, that was purchased with the precious Blood of our Redeemer: no other sacrifice could be found worthy of it. If it means the Body and Church of Christ on earth, He obtained for us the privilege of being members of Him no otherwise than by offering Himself on the Cross. If again by the kingdom of heaven we understand inward holiness and righteousness, Christ reigning in our heart and life: it was the Cross which procured for us the gift of His Holy Spirit to make so great a change within us. It is only by loving, embracing, bearing the Cross, that we, by God's help, become partakers of the benefit. Thus every way, Christ's Passion is that on which His kingdom depends: He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death; therefore the Father hath highly exalted Him, to be King in heaven, King in His Church, King in the heart of every one of His people.

^c S. Matt. xiii. 24. sqq.

^d Rom. xiv. 17.

When therefore Christian persons, kneeling around the Cross of our Saviour, as we all kneel this Holy Week, say in His Prayer, "Thy kingdom come," they do in effect pray that His Cross may do its work more and more perfectly; that according to the prophet's saying^e, He may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied: may be honoured more and more by those, for whom He suffered, yielding themselves to be made happy by Him. The Cross cannot be without the kingdom, nor the kingdom without the Cross.

Accordingly we find that all along, even in the very depth of His worst affliction, our Saviour, to the eye of faith, had sure tokens of His royal glories around Him. The very charge, on which He was condemned, was, that He made Himself King of the Jews. He plainly owned Himself to Pilate, when privately examined, "Thou sayest that I am a King." After He was condemned, the air all around Him was full of the insulting voices of people crying out in mockery, "Hail, King of the Jews." They dressed Him in mockery as a king, with crown, robe, and sceptre, thorns, purple rags, and a reed; and came round Him, bowing the knee in derision. Even on the Cross, it is supposed, He still wore the Crown of Thorns; and over His Head Pilate set up as a title, This is "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews:" owning Him to be what He really was, though he meant it not in earnest; and it is very remarkable how Pilate refused to take down this inscription, when the chief Priests wished him to do so: as though his hand were held by some power which he

^e Is. liii. 11.

knew not of. They said, "Write not, the king of the Jews, but that He said, I am king of the Jews." Pilate answered; "What I have written I have written ^f." And so his confession stood, and you could not look up to the Cross without reading on it the acknowledgement, that He, Who hung there in so much torment and reproach, is the Saviour and King of God's own chosen people. Moreover on that very Cross, like a king on a throne, He performed a most royal office; He publicly forgave the Penitent thief, a great criminal, humbling himself before Him, and begging to be remembered when our Lord should come in His kingdom. Thus every way, both by believers and unbelievers, the Lord Jesus was acknowledged as a King, on His Cross.

And shall not we acknowledge Him too, for whom especially He died, and for whom He reigns? Shall we pass by, every one on our way to our worldly business or pleasure, and refuse to look up to Him and own Him, while all the while He has each one of us in His Heart? Shall we not take Him for our King, Who is dying, that we may be all crowned kings in Heaven?

Christ's gracious will in being lifted up is to draw all men unto Him. He desires to reign as King in our hearts and lives. For ever and ever He has reigned, is reigning, and will reign over all things in heaven and earth: but this, if I may so speak, does not satisfy Him. So great, so inconceivable is His love towards sinners, that He is not content, without winning them to love and obey Him. Behold how He stretches forth His Hands to you all day long upon

^f S. John xix. 19-22.

this His Cross, the high place of His Kingdom : hear how mournfully He seems to say over and over, “^gYe will not come to Me, that ye might have life.” See how fast He is pouring out His very Heart’s Blood to redeem you ; and you deal scornfully with Him : you know of His Sufferings, yet look another way. He wants to draw you to Him ; that is the very cause for which He is lifted up : He calls you, as it were, by your name ; and will you not hear ? Will you not be drawn to Him ? Then to whom else will you go ? What other king will you find ? What greater love are you looking after, than that He, Who is God and Man, should die that you may reign with Him ? Make haste, throw yourself down at the foot of His Cross, and beseech Him, by all that He is there enduring, to set up His kingdom in your heart from this very moment.

And if His kingdom be in your heart, you will not long be without earnest thoughts of His visible kingdom, the Church on earth ; that Body made up of His members and your brethren, to which, by His grace, you now appertain. “^hChrist loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” He purchased it with His own Blood. How can we ever think enough of the privilege of belonging to that heavenly company, which He so dearly loves ? of being, each one of us, parts of His Spouse, and His Body ? How can we ever love one another too well, delight too much in Church-Service, and Holy Communion, watch and pray too earnestly, that we may keep ourselves undefiled members of Christ’s Body, and be worthy to do some little good in spreading His heavenly kingdom, causing

^g S. John v. 40.

^h Eph. v. 25.

others to know, and love Him? As it is, we are yet beneath the shadow of His Cross; that healing shadow, which only can keep us safe. Take we good care, that we do not wander away from it into the scorching heat of this evil world, which would soon wither up all our imperfect goodness.

And finally, whereas, when He comes in His glorious kingdom, He will remember such as the penitent thief, will remember them and bid them be with Him in Paradise, let us, who ought to be penitents, now that we see our King on His Cross, try at least to grieve for our many sins. Whatever we suffer, whether plainly from God's Providence or from the unkindness of other men; let us remember that our King is "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:" and let us thankfully say, "We indeed justly, for we receive far less than the due reward of our deeds: but This Man hath done nothing amiss; He is our King, suffering wholly for us: why should we grudge, as faithful subjects, to suffer a little while for His sake, and then be called to reign with Him?"

SERMON XLIX.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE PASSION.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

SUPPOSE a person of some natural goodness to be passing by on his way to or from Jerusalem, where our Blessed Lord is hanging in torment on the Cross. He turns aside to see that great sight: it takes hold of his heart and soul: he forgets for a while the occasion of his journey, his own business or pleasure, and remains, watching and listening there. What are the feelings that would naturally possess his heart? What the thoughts and imaginations, that would employ his mind?

Among others, I suppose, we may be quite sure there would be a keen sense of wrong done, a strong feeling of indignation. I mean that, when such a bystander came to see how meekly, calmly, courageously the Divine Sufferer bore all that was done to Him, and on the other hand the intense cruelty and insult of almost all who were around Him, he would, in his heart, make a kind of appeal to the Maker of all things and Judge of all men, sitting on His Throne in heaven. He would say in his heart something like the words of the Psalmist, "O Lord, how long, how long shall the ungodly triumph? How long shall

the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme Thy name for ever? Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand? Why pluckest Thou not Thy right hand out of Thy bosom to consume the enemy?" He would wonder perhaps that the earth did not open and swallow up the enemies of Christ, or a thunderbolt fall on them from heaven, or an Angel appear, as to Balaam and David, with his sword drawn in his hand.

This would very likely be our first feeling, could we, such as most of us are, be transported suddenly to the foot of the Cross. But when we came to look up again, and perceived the entire resignation of the dying Saviour, how completely He had made up His mind to suffer all that was laid upon Him, because it was His Father's Will: when we saw *that*, I suppose we should begin to feel, that resignation became us also: that there was a deep meaning in it all, more than we could understand: and that the only right thing for us to do was to wait, with lowly, sorrowful, loving and obedient hearts, and see what good the Almighty would bring out of this great and overpowering evil.

Now these two feelings, of earnest appeal first, and entire resignation afterwards, so natural, as you see they are, when we are in spirit waiting by the Cross of our Lord, are also the same two feelings, which naturally belong to the third petition in the Prayer of our Blessed Lord, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." For when a thoughtful person stands by, and sees how things are going on here among men, it may well cause him to think, with a longing sigh, how far otherwise it is in that blessed Home, on which, by God's help, he tries to set his

heart. And so he naturally appeals to God, and desires and prays that He would shew Himself, and make more of Heaven on earth: which is the very meaning of the clause, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." But again, when we recollect how very blind and sinful and imperfect we are ourselves, how much more dearly God loves us and all men, than any of us love ourselves, and how much better He knows, what is good for us: recollecting this, we learn to resign ourselves, and say, "Thy will be done," in the same kind of sense as our Saviour said it in His Agony: submitting to evil, instead of being eager to cure it.

Thus the Cross teaches, more perfectly than any thing else could, to say as we ought those words of our Saviour's Prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." We have seen it in general: let us now go to some particulars.

God's will is done in heaven by the blessed Angels and saints loving each other with entire and perfect love; rejoicing, each one in the other's joy; knowing not at all what it is to grudge one's companion any good thing whatever, though it be never so high above our own portion. But this good and acceptable and perfect will of our Father was never so contradicted on earth, as by the wicked crucifiers of Jesus Christ: the Jews who delivered Him to Pilate for envy; the heathen, who tormented Him, for malice and pride and cruelty.

Again, in heaven God's Will is done by the perfect obedience and order of the Holy Angels, every one knowing his place, and all serving before God continually in the perfect beauty of holiness. But

around the Cross of our dying Master, all is strife and horrid confusion; the chief Priests, the soldiers, the passers by, railing and taunting, the very thieves on their crosses, at the point of death, reviling Him also: the guards casting lots over His garments; very few, at first, moved even to pity Him, much less to any thing like due reverence of the awful Sacrifice which He was offering up for us all.

Again, in heaven all is quiet peace and tranquillity: peace between God and His Angels, the Angels at peace one with another, and delighting to be sent with messages of peace on earth, the saints rejoicing in perfect peace, and assured of continuing in it for ever. But around the Cross no two persons among the enemies of Christ agree, except just for the time, as Pilate and Herod, "who were made friends together" merely for the purpose of using our Lord ill. But for the rest, the Romans could not endure the Jewish multitude; the chief Priests, we know, scorned them both; the very soldiers could not agree about parting His garments, without casting lots: and all were in hatred and warfare against Him, their King and Saviour.

Once again; heaven is all joy and gladness: but around and upon the Cross, as we know, were gathered all fears and pains and agonies, the sin and the punishment of the whole world. Thus in every way, a person present at the Crucifixion of our Lord might well cry out in grief and horror, "When will this sad scene change? When will the great and good Father put forth His power, and cause His will, instead of being thus outraged, to be done here on earth, as the happy spirits do it in Heaven?"

So it might be, if a person there present had busied himself chiefly with looking around, and seeing how *they* behaved, who were either employed in crucifying our Lord, or merely looking on. But when the same person came to look more stedfastly on the Cross itself, and on Him Who is there fastened, other thoughts surely, and far happier ones, would begin to enter into his mind. He would see that, in the midst of all this misery and wickedness, God's will was being done more perfectly and more wonderfully than the highest Angel in heaven can do it, in all the peace and light of that blessed place. He would see God the Son, God made Man, fulfilling now to the uttermost His own deep inconceivable meaning, when consenting to take the Body, which His Father had prepared Him, He said (as we read in the fortieth Psalm) "Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O God." He would see Him, drinking to the very dregs the Cup concerning which He had prayed that, if it were possible, it might pass from Him. Why? Because it was His Father's will, and He would not have His own will done, but His Father's. Whatever the wicked persons around were doing to make the place most hateful, most unlike heaven, we see Jesus Christ taking and using it all in such a way, as to turn the very Cross into a heaven upon earth: meeting their bitter reproaches with a heavenly silence; their cruel wounds, and stripes, and nails, with a heavenly intercession, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do:" even as He also meets their penitence (for one at least among them was penitent) with forgiveness, and assurance of Paradise.

And what shall we say to the feeling of desolation,

the feeling, as though God had forsaken us? Is it possible to turn even that into heavenly comfort, to bring our Father nearer to us, by its means? Yes: Jesus Christ did so. When He cried out, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me," He did not the less go on accomplishing all His Father's will, all that remained of His Sacrifice: and in the end seemingly it was turned into comfort, He committed His Spirit into His Father's hands, and well may we believe that never was there so much of heaven on earth, because never was God's will so perfectly done on earth, perhaps never even in heaven itself was it so perfectly done, as in that awful moment.

This one instruction, then, my brethren, we will, if it please God, all of us learn to-day from the saving Cross of our Lord. When things appear most to go ill with us, when we are most tempted to complain of other men's sinfulness and our own discomfort, we will think of Christ on the Cross; how He met hard words with quietness, ill-usage with intercession, sadness and desolation with persevering prayer: and how at last He bowed the Head, and meekly completed His Father's will and His own Sacrifice by dying for us. O blessed for ever and ever will that person prove, who shall try in earnest to go through the world and out of it, in such a mind as Jesus Christ had, when He bowed His Head, and gave up the Ghost!

SERMON L.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE PASSION.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

THURSDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

It is not hard to see, what circumstance of our Lord's last days is specially connected with this part of His prayer. He is Himself our Bread, the true Bread from heaven, and since we need Him every day, since we cannot go on at all without Him, since He is as much wanted for the support of our heavenly and spiritual life as the bread we eat is for the life of our bodies, we see at once that He is our *daily* Bread also. We cannot go on for a moment in the way to heaven; our very souls would be cut off from God and die, except we have special communion with Him. This He had taught His disciples long before, when He told them that He was the true Bread from heaven: that His Flesh was meat indeed, and His Blood drink indeed, and that, whosoever eateth Him, he should live by Him. But the gracious Promise could not be fulfilled, until the time came for our Lord to suffer. Until then, His disciples went on believing, but doubting and wondering what He could possibly mean.

At last, on the evening before His death, the even-

ing of this very day, as nearly perhaps as might be, at this very hour, or a little before, the Blessed and Holy Lord Jesus gave Himself to be the daily Bread of our souls unto the world's end. He took bread, common bread, part of what they were using at their meal, and blessed and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, "Take, eat, This is My Body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me." By which we understand, that whoever, to the world's end, shall worthily partake of this Holy Communion is truly made partaker of the Body of Jesus Christ, and of all the benefits of His gracious and saving Sacrifice.

But, you will observe, it is particularly set down, that our Lord said, "My Body *broken* for you." As the Bread must be broken and divided, before it could be eaten, so the Body of the Holy Jesus was to be rent and torn, even unto death, before It could become our food, and nourish us to eternal life. This then is one point of view, in which we, standing by the Cross, may contemplate the Wounds, the torn Body of Jesus Christ. In spirit we ought to be standing there during the whole of this week: standing and looking up and gazing on this wonderful sight. And as I said, when we behold His Wounds, His whole Body pierced, mangled and bruised, may not the thought well come into our minds, He is not only dying for us, but is also preparing Himself to be our spiritual Food and Sustenance in the holy Sacrament of His Supper? Among other reasons for which He is enduring all this, one is, that He may become the everlasting nourishment of our whole heavenly being: our sinful bodies to be made clean by His Body, and our souls to be washed by His most precious

Blood, and we to dwell evermore in Him, and He in us.

For as sin and misery came into the world by the eating of the fruit which hung on the Tree of knowledge, so it pleased God from the beginning, that holiness and life should come by eating of that other Fruit, which should in due time hang on the Tree of Life : that is, the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, fastened to the Tree of the Cross. And again, when God would deliver His people from Egypt, He not only had the Lamb sacrificed and the blood sprinkled, but also appointed that every one should partake of the flesh of it : and moreover, that that flesh should be roasted whole on something much in the form of a cross. So that a person, who knew much of the old types and shadows, when he considered our Lord's Sufferings, might perceive that He was thus preparing Himself to be our spiritual Food : as certainly as, when we see corn thrashed and ground, we know that it is being got ready to be the food of our bodies.

Now, consider this well, and lay it to heart. Well might we have thought, What could our gracious God and Saviour do more for us, than that He should suffer death, death in torments, for our sake? And yet in a certain sense He has done more for us. He has given Himself, after dying for us, to be our Food. So dearly does He love these poor lost souls of ours, so earnestly does He desire to make them happy for ever, that He is not (if I may so say) contented, without bringing them as near as possible to Himself : so near, that they may be one with Him, and He with them ; so near, that they may be truly and spiritually said to eat Him, to be members of Him,

to live by His life, to have Him abiding within them, His Blood in a manner flowing in their veins. Consider it well: could any love be greater than this? A nursing mother loves her child dearly, and feels, I suppose, most happy in being able to give it nourishment out of her own bosom. But what is *that* to the love of Jesus Christ, Who permits Himself to be nailed to a Cross, that He may give, not innocent children, but sinners, rebels, enemies, haters of Himself, not milk but Blood, the very Blood from His own Heart, to be their spiritual drink, the life and healing of their sick souls? He, this crucified Sufferer, to Whom we look up on the Cross, is our God, our Creator and Preserver. He has fed us, all our lives long, unto this day. But as if it were a light thing for Him to feed our bodies, behold He is now preparing an everlasting Banquet for our souls: and at how dear a rate to Himself! At the cost of all these stripes, and bonds, and insults, and thorns, and Wounds, and Blood! He gives us His whole self: He keeps back nothing. All His care is, that we should be the better for His love. He offers it all in the Feast of Holy Communion. What could have been done more for us? There only remains that one thing, which, by His grace, we are able to do for ourselves. And what is that? You know it well, all of you, would you but set your minds to it. If you were hungry, and came to some kind person for bread, and he shewed you bread within your reach, and told you to take it, you would know very well what to do: you would just reach out your hand, and thankfully take it. Here your souls are starving for the Bread of Life, and your kind Saviour offers it, pre-

pared by Himself on His Cross. He offers it to you in His Holy Sacrament of Communion. Will you not reach out your hand, and take it? Are you not afraid to slight so gracious an offer? You cannot possibly be ignorant of it. It is repeated to you at least every fortnight. Why do you make as though you did not hear it? The Bread is broken, and blessed, and held out to you. Why are your hands not humbly lifted up to receive it? Alas, (perhaps you will say) my hands are unclean. I dare not reach them out, for fear of profaning the Holy Gift. And indeed too often it is quite true. But is there not water at hand, "a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness," Blood and Water from His pierced Side, enough to wash out the stain of your sin, so that you may come with clean hands and a prepared heart. You do not stay away from your meals, because you must first have the trouble of washing your hands. Refuse not then the food of your souls, because you must first have the trouble of cleansing your hearts.

One word more, to those among you especially, who do come or have come to the Holy Communion, but so very seldom, that we cannot but fear that you have a very wrong or imperfect notion of it. One word more to *them*: and let it be the word, *daily*. As the corn which makes your bread would do you little good, were you only to have one or two meals in the whole course of your life, so the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, prepared on the Cross to be your "Meat indeed," was intended to be your regular, constant meat: to be taken not once for all, but continually. So the first Christians took it. It was to them literally daily Bread. When they heard or

said the Lord's Prayer, and came to the petition about "daily bread," the Holy Eucharist was the first thing they thought of. We are not good enough, far from it, to be so favoured as they were: but at least it ought to startle and alarm us, to find ourselves so very very unlike them, as not even *monthly* to wish for that, which they could not go a single day without.

God forbid, that any one should come in a hurry, or carelessly; but God forbid also, that we should value the gift so little, as to turn away from it, or think it a great thing to come once a year, or but once or twice in our lives. How can we look to be saved by Christ's Cross, if we so make void one chief purpose of His in permitting Himself to be lifted up on it?

SERMON LI.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE PASSION.

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES.

GOOD FRIDAY.

AGAIN we appear before our Saviour's Cross, with His own Prayer, in this His own Week: on this, which is more especially His own Day: the day of His Martyrdom: the day of the Great Sacrifice: the day of Salvation. When may we say our prayers with better hope of being graciously heard, than during those hours which are set apart for the remembrance of His precious Death? the very hours, which He spent in shame and torture before the Cross, in agony upon it, in the shadow of death after it? Where may we expect a gracious answer, if not on Calvary, whilst in spirit we are kneeling with S. John and the holy women, under the very shadow of our suffering Jesus? And if, among all our prayers, there be any one, which seems to go up with a surer and better chance of being granted, than the rest, is it not this petition, which we are now come to in our Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us?" Our Lord, as we all know and confess, died on purpose that our sins might be forgiven. How

should He not be well-pleased with our prayer, when we simply ask Him to do that, which He so desires to do, that He gave His life for it?

He, our best and only Friend, laid down His life, that we might be forgiven. This alone might teach us, if we would consider, how great need we have of forgiveness. What indeed is there, which we can possibly want so much? Consider a little: how have we gone on, the strictest among us, even to this very day. I desire to put it to the heart and conscience of every one of us for himself: and I do it the rather, as there is hope, that some at least have been making, more or less, good use of the holy days and weeks, now so nearly come to an end: there is hope that some, more or fewer, have been considering their ways carefully over, and are therefore able to answer the question within themselves, truly and profitably, as soon as it is asked. Again therefore, I put the question; to myself and to every one here I put it; "How have we gone on, the strictest among us, even to this very day?"

All our lives long we have known, or we know that we might have known, the great mercy which He wrought for us. As soon as we were born almost, He caused us to be brought close to the foot of His Cross, and there to be washed all over with the Water and Blood which was gushing out of His wounded Side: out of His Heart, which He so lovingly and so wonderfully opened unto us. How often have we thought of that? Must we not own, alas! that it has been very seldom in our minds at all? The sign of the Cross was made in our foreheads, and we have had it there all our lives, but how little have we

thought of it! There it has been, in the sight of Him Who gave it: in the sight of His holy Angels, and in the sight of the evil spirits who wish to blot it out: but we ourselves have forgotten it; hour after hour, day after day, it is well if not year after year, we have forgotten Him Who died for us; we have gone on, for long portions of time, positively without thinking of Him.

Nay, and has it not been far worse than that, in the greater part of us at least? Has it not been far worse than mere neglect and forgetfulness? Has there not been wilful deliberate sin, that is to say, positive ingratitude towards Him; using Him ill to His Face in return for His inconceivable love? Surely so it has been, as often as any one of us has been tempted to do what conscience told him was wrong in God's sight, and he has nevertheless gone on, and done it. It was sinning under the Cross; positive unthankfulness to Him Who died for us. We talk lightly sometimes of wilful sin: but think how much is meant by that word "wilful?" It means, full of one's own will, determined to have it in despite of God's will. It means such a temper as that of the falling angels, who made up their minds, even in heaven, against what they knew to be the mind of God. It is as if a dear friend were on his death-bed, dying for love of us, and earnestly beseeching us with his last breath to behave in such and such a way, and we in the very sick room, and with his eye fixed upon us, went on with a high hand, doing just the contrary. This is wilful sin. I mean this is part of the notion of it: for to say altogether what it is, is beyond all words of man: it is

too foul, too shocking, too monstrous. But whatever it be, Christ died to deliver us from it, and we have gone on, more or less, committing it to His Face. Who ever needed forgiveness, if we do not?

And where is Forgiveness to be had, but only here? Here in Presence of God the Son, offering Himself for it to His Father upon His chosen Altar, the Cross? Some persons indeed seem to think that there is such virtue in a man's own repentance, as may suffice of itself to do away God's anger and obtain remission of sin. The Almighty, they truly say, is exceeding merciful: "if a man is truly sorry for what he has done, that is enough: all will come right at last." Such, alas! has too often been our easy way of dealing with our God and our souls. But only open your eyes, and look about you. How is it in matters of this world? When people have gone wrong and brought some visible present evil on themselves, that evil does not depart on their just being sorry for what they have done. A person has been intemperate, and the intemperance has brought on sickness; the sickness does not depart because he is grieved at it. Another person has committed some crime, and the law passes sentence on him; to be imprisoned perhaps, or transported, or even to suffer death. He is heartily sorry; he wishes he had not done it. Does his sorrow take off the sentence? Far from it. Unless he can obtain the Sovereign's pardon, he must suffer, be he never so penitent. And so, Holy Scripture plainly tells us, we shall find it between us and our God. He is the great King: we must obtain His pardon. Merely being sorry that we have done amiss, is by no means enough. A man may be sorry,

for fear of punishment, without at all hating his sin, without at all loving God. But God's own word is, "By *faith* ye are saved." "Whosoever *believeth* in Him, shall not perish." God is ready to forgive, and most willing to pardon us, but we must come to Him in the way which He has ordained, and that is, through His Only-begotten Son. It was not Prophet, Saint, or Martyr; it was not an Angel from heaven who was appointed to save us; but it is, the Word or Son of God, which was made Very Man, offering Himself here on the Cross, and received by us in faith and in Holy Communion. We may not trust in our own repentance, our own faith, our own works; but we must come to the Cross and be made whole. We must look up there, and see what is being done and suffered for us; and if our hard hearts refuse to be moved, if we feel as if we had no love, no real thankfulness for His unutterable mercy, then we must ask Him to move our hearts, to make us thankful to Him, and contrite for ourselves. We must be sorry and ashamed that we are not more sorry and ashamed. If, in this mind, we come before Him with the words which He has graciously taught us, "Forgive us our trespasses," no doubt He will forgive.

But then, mark it well. If we do come in this mind, we shall of course be quite ready to forgive all who have offended us. Nature herself seems to teach us, how strange and monstrous a thing it would be, to look for pardon ourselves, while we refuse to pardon others. Who ever heard our Saviour's parable of the unmerciful servant, without acknowledging in his heart, how true, and right the saying is, "a Shouldest

^a S. Matt. xviii. 33.

not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?" That is to say, men's own common sense and feeling teaches them to forgive, if ever they hope to be forgiven.

Suppose a man, then, coming to the Cross, grieved as he seems to himself, and heavy-laden with the burthen of his sins, and entreating our Lord to take it off: but suppose, at the same time, that he permits himself to cherish some inward ill-will, to seek revenge on another who has used him ill. May it not be said to that man, "Nay, this crucified Saviour is the same with Him Who preached the Sermon, and taught you there, quite expressly, 'b If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses?' Christ is the same as when He said those words; His mind is not at all changed: though He loves you so well, that He is even now dying for you, yet He cannot forgive you, without your being willing to forgive."

But you have been so *very* ill-used; they have dealt with you so *very* wickedly! What? Have you been seized in the middle of the night, while you were at your prayers, by the very persons for whom you were praying, to whose good also your whole life had been given up? Have you been persecuted to death, falsely accused, spit upon, beaten, reviled, scourged, stripped, crowned with thorns, laden with a cross, nailed to it, hanged upon it? Which of all these things have you had to endure, that you should feel as if you could not forgive, when He Who endured

^b S. Matt. vi. 14, 15.

all this, was all the while praying and dying for those who did it?

My brethren, we may think perhaps that we do not ourselves much need these warnings: we may think ourselves very forgiving, and in no danger of bearing malice: but are we quite sure that we thoroughly know ourselves? Who knows but something may happen before long to disappoint and vex us in somewhat which is near our heart? Some worse unkindness or disrespect, than we are at all prepared for? Should such be the case, remember our Lord on the Cross, and put away at once all unforgiving, all scornful, revengeful thoughts. Think how He prayed for His crucifiers, how He forgave in a moment the repenting thief, how He promised him a happy meeting in Paradise. O joyful thought for all who truly forgive! They shall be partakers of that happy meeting, where the givers and receivers of pardon shall be blessed together for evermore, with Him Who alone is the Fountain of all Pardon!

SERMON LII.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE PASSION.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

EASTER EVE.

THE end of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer is deliverance from evil, and so is the end of His Passion. Temptation and evil were overcome for ever by that last cry of His, and by His giving up the Ghost: and now all is security and rest. Consider the difference between to-day and yesterday: or even between three or four o'clock yesterday, and six or seven o'clock. Had we been present on Mount Calvary, on that first Good Friday, our very eyes and ears would have borne witness to a great and marvellous change. Yesterday afternoon it was all darkness: a strange darkness, coming on at noonday: now the sun shines out as usual. Yesterday all around was bustle, and tumult, and confusion: now the garden, and burial ground, and place of execution, are in the full quietness of a great Sabbath. Yesterday there were crowds of rude soldiers and scornful Pharisees: now there are but "Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the Sepulchre:" except indeed that there are a few soldiers keeping watch over the

Tomb. Yesterday there were cries of agony, and loud reproaches : now it is a kind of religious silence all around. Yesterday the world was here : now it is away. Yesterday the Lord was exposed on His Cross : to-day He is safe, hidden and sheltered, in His grave.

This is what our eyes would have seen ; and all of it may be understood as an outward token of the far more perfect and blissful change, which at the same time befel the Spirit of our gracious Lord : beyond what eye could see or ear hear ; beyond all that could enter into the heart of man. Our Lord after one loud cry, bows His Head and gives up the Ghost ; what an alteration is there in a moment ! For pain it is Joy, for thirst, full Satisfaction ; for agony, Victory : for darkness, Light ; for Calvary, Paradise : and for revilers, the Saints of old, Abraham and his seed, rejoicing in the coming of our Lord.

For this is what the Faith of Christ teaches us to believe concerning our Lord in the interval between death and Resurrection : that He went down into Hell, that is to the unseen place, where the souls of the Patriarchs and other holy men who died before Him, were waiting their appointed time, to see Him and to be delivered by Him : and that He in one moment delivered them from their prison of hope, and took them with Him into Paradise. In that moment then all the mighty changes which I have mentioned were brought to pass. Instead of the pain and agony of the Cross, racking every limb, and entering into the very Soul, we are now to think of a Body slumbering in the perfect peace of the grave, and a Soul free and rejoicing in Paradise. Instead of that parching

Thirst, the Divine Soul begins to be satisfied with the fulness of God's House, and to "drink of His pleasures, as of a river." It was agony; a violent struggle; our Lord's last struggle with the powers of darkness: now He goes forth conquering, and to conquer; the gates and bars of the unseen prison all fly asunder before Him, and the righteous souls, there detained for a while, are delivered. Around Him, when He died, was darkness, the deepest and grossest darkness of this world; now He is in the Light of the world to come; or rather He is Himself the Light of that world: in His Light the holy fathers there begin to see such light as they had never seen before. They, the holy fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Noah, Daniel, Moses, Job and the rest, they are now His companions for a little while, instead of the revilers and mockers who surrounded the Cross: they rejoice to see His day, they behold it and are glad. He quits Golgotha, the place of a skull, dismally strewn with the bones of deceased malefactors, and He departs, as it should seem, into Abraham's bosom, a place of rest and hope, peopled by the righteous and penitent souls, who, like Lazarus, from time to time have been carried thither by Angels. In a word, this mortal life, with its innumerable miseries and humiliations, is at an end with Him for ever. No more desolation, no more bitterness, no more pain of any kind. Death has set Him free, once for all. There is no other deliverance from evil. As there was none for Him, so neither is there any for us.

Turn this well in your minds, my brethren: for Christ Himself there was no other deliverance from

the evil of this world, than to die and go out of the world. As our Church says in the Visitation-service, "Christ went not up to joy, without first suffering pain; He entered not into His glory, before He was crucified." And His deliverance, as it is the token and mean, so also is it the ensample and pattern, of ours. As His freedom came by death, so must ours too.

It follows, that, whenever we say the Lord's Prayer, we do in substance and effect pray for death, little as we may have thought of such a thing. For we say "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." But since there is no being freed from evils and temptations, except by the stroke of death, you see plainly that this is a prayer for death: a prayer for death, which we put up, by our Lord's especial direction, as often as we repeat His Prayer in our devotions.

This is a thought surely to make us very grave, quite earnest in serving our God. If we really pray for death so often, what manner of persons ought we to be? We ought to be, in some measure, fit to die: else, how dangerous to pray that we may die: for what, if God should take us at our word, we being yet unprepared? Let us take this warning from the Cross of Jesus Christ, from which we have been now again receiving so many good lessons: let it quicken us in preparing timely for the most certain yet most uncertain hour of death: most certain to be, yet most uncertain when. What should our preparation be? We must labour to become such as the blessed Cross would make us, did we duly accept and take it on ourselves. As Christ passed by His Cross into glory,

so may we by our Cross, if we will: God lays it on us, whatever it be, for that very purpose. Use it as He meant, and it will keep you from being led into temptation, and will in the end deliver you from all evil.

Now, what is our meaning, when we say to each one of you, Use your cross as your Saviour meant you should? I mean this: that whereas each one of us has some sort of affliction, trouble, or anxiety, some more, some less, but none quite free from all, we should use ourselves, whenever we are pressed by it, to think on the Cross of Christ; to consider that we are under that Cross: our trouble is a token of remembrance from Him Who hangs there: we are sure that, if we pray to Him, He will intercede for us and help us. Your trouble has done you much good, has helped you greatly against temptation, if it has caused you to pray better.

And let your uneasiness, whatever it be, quicken and inflame you with longing desire to partake of that blessed Rest, to which our Lord Christ was finally conducted by this severe way of the Cross: the Rest of this great Sabbath, the Rest which remaineth for the people of God. The more our pain and discomfort press on us, the more desirable surely to escape from it into that peaceful grave, here prepared for us under the shadow of the Cross. Here is no more temptation, no more evil. No more temptation; for the devil cannot come near; the stone is sealed, not by unbelieving Jews, but by Christ Himself with His own unconquerable sign: a watch is set, not of heathen soldiers, but of Angels from heaven, keeping guard over the sleeping bodies and tranquil souls

of the dead, who have died in the Lord. No more temptation: for the world, with its snares and terrors, is here quite shut out: and the flesh is put off for ever. No more evil; because there is no more sin, but sure and certain hope of everlasting life in the great Day of Resurrection. This is the state of the Christian dead: prayed for continually in our Lord's Prayer, and ensured to us, year after year, by the return of this His Burial-Day. Do not think of it, as of something afar off. It is very near us, if we are really trying to live always in God's faith and fear. For then death, come when he may, will introduce us in a moment to that blessed condition; and death may come any day or hour.

SERMON LIII.

OLD TESTAMENT TYPES OF THE CROSS. I.

THE TREE OF LIFE.

MONDAY.

GEN. ii. 9.

“The Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden.”

Now that the Holy Week has come, and the Cross is again in a manner solemnly lifted up in the Church, I wish, as in former years, to enter with you on some course of meditation, which may prepare us all, by God's mercy, to keep Good Friday and Easter more worthily. And it has come into my mind, What if we were to go back in our thoughts to some of the most remarkable types of the Holy Cross, which are to be found so often in the Old Testament? They were no doubt intended, not only to prepare the men of old for our Lord when He should come, but also to help us in thinking worthily of Him, now He is come. It may be well, before I go further, that I should just tell you what I mean by “a type of the Cross.” I mean some person or thing, so described in the Old Testament, that the faithful people of God, when they should read or hear of it long afterwards, might be put in mind of the Cross. Now, if a considerate Christian opened his Bible, to see what he could find

of this sort, he would not have far to look ; for in the very first book, the first chapter but one, he would light upon one of the most remarkable types and figures of the Cross. For what is it which we read of Paradise ? Out of the ground of that happy garden the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food—the Tree of life also in the midst of the garden. There were a great many trees, but one there was, remarkable and eminent above the rest: one which stood in the midst, the others standing round it, and as it were waiting upon it. Its very situation shewed, that it was meant to be more thought of than all the rest. And no wonder; for by the grace of God there was some quality in the fruit of that Tree, which should help those who partook of it to live for ever. So that when Adam and Eve, by their sin, had forfeited their happy condition, this was the very reason given for turning them out of Paradise : “Lest the man put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.” And not only was the man driven out, but a guard also was set, to keep him from ever approaching that tree. “Cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way,” were placed “to keep the way of the Tree of life.” In short, it was distinguished from all the rest as a kind of sacramental Tree: he that ate of it should live for ever, he that was driven out from it should die the death.

Now that first Paradise, where Adam and Eve were on their trial, was a figure and type of the happy condition of Christians: as our Lord signified to the penitent thief, saying, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” And in this new and better Para-

dise there is also a Tree of Life : as our Saviour again signifies, promising to some of His faithful ones in the book of Revelation, “^aTo him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” And more particularly, in the last chapter of Revelations. In the midst of the street of the heavenly Jerusalem, and on either side of the river of life, S. John saw the Tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month ; and the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the nations : or as the Prophet Ezekiel heard the same a long time before^b ; By the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, all trees were to grow for meat, whose leaf should not fade, nor the fruit thereof be consumed : bringing forth new fruit according to its months—the fruit for meat, and the leaf for medicine.

What is this wonderful Tree, which was to stand in God’s new Paradise, as its type and shadow had stood in the garden of Eden ? what is this true and real Tree of life ? There is but one thing that answers to it : and *that* answers to it perfectly. It is the Cross : the Cross of Christ, with Him that hangeth thereon. As a token of which, the Cross is called the Tree many times in the Bible : as it is written, “cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree :” and S. Paul says of our Lord’s enemies, “^cWhen they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the Tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre : but God raised Him from the dead.” The Tree then is the Holy Cross : and the fruit of the Tree is that which hung upon the Cross, the most pure, blessed,

^a Rev. ii. 7.^b Ezek. xlvii. 12.^c Acts xiii. 29, 30.

life-giving Body of our Lord. It is for food : for He said, " My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed : " so truly meat and drink, that all this carnal and earthly meat and drink, which we mortals depend so much upon, is but a figure and shadow, in comparison of it. He that eateth of such meat as this world provides for him may go on living for a little while : but he that eateth spiritually and sacramentally of that Flesh which hung on the Cross, the true Tree of Life, he shall live for evermore. The fruit then of the Tree of Life is the Lord's Body given us for meat : and the leaves of the same Tree, it is thought, are the holy words and promises of our Lord, which are given us for medicine, for the healing of the nations : because when sick souls receive those promises by faith, it has a marvellous power to heal and support them, and drive away him who would poison them with sinful thoughts. And the Tree of Life grows by the Water of Life. Jesus Christ crucified gives Himself in Holy Communion to those who have duly received His Holy Spirit in Baptism, and by the help of the same Spirit have washed away their after sins in true Christian repentance. The Tree of Life yields its fruit continually, and bears all manner of fruits ; that is, Christ crucified, in the sacrament of His Body and Blood, gives Himself as our daily Bread, and in such sort as to be, in one, all manner of blessings to suit our various needs.

In all these respects, the Tree of Life answers to the Cross : but the point, of which I shall speak in what remains, is this one, That it stood in the midst of the garden. The Cross, we know, the real Cross

of wood, to which our gracious Saviour was nailed, stood in the midst of a garden, or at least very near one: the garden, not of Paradise, but of Calvary. For S. John says, “^a In the place where He was crucified, was a garden.” No doubt, if we had been then in that garden, His Cross, lifted up as it was, would have drawn all our attention: it would have looked like the one great thing, to which all the other things around it had respect, and waited, as it were, on it: like the other trees in Paradise waiting on the Tree of Life. And now, although we are far from that place, and wherever we are, are out of sight of the outward and visible Cross itself, yet we know that inwardly and spiritually the same Cross is reared in every Christian Church. Here, as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people, I trust we may truly say, with fear and great joy, that Jesus Christ is evidently set forth, crucified among us, as often as we celebrate the memorial Sacrifice of His Death, in the way He Himself ordained. I trust we may truly say, that in Communion-times this very place is, in a spiritual sense, Paradise; and that faithful receivers do here eat of the Tree of Life. Now as all the trees of Paradise stood round that one Tree, and made in a manner obeisance to it, as the sheaves in Joseph’s dream, so in every Christian Church the old and good way is to make it plain to the very eye that Holy Communion is the principal Service; the Altar-Table the chief part of the furniture; the Chancel a very special portion of the building. Old Churches, in all countries, are found, I believe, to be so arranged, and always have been so, because the very end of all

^a S. John xix. 41.

Churches is to do honour to Christ crucified, making us partakers of Himself.

So also the whole of the Creed has reference to that one Article, "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried." And the whole history of our Lord's life in the Gospel is the preparation for that one awful moment, in which He breathed out His Soul upon the Cross. All His life long, He was looking for and hastening to that day: as He once told His disciples, "I have a Baptism (of Blood) to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" So too, the whole yearly life of the Church, as it is marked out in the Calendar at the beginning of the Prayer Book, evidently looks to the Tree of Life, Christ on the Cross, as the one great Thing, the Keystone crowning the whole arch, and binding all the rest together. For the time of Good Friday and Easter Day is, as you know, what settles the times of all the other Sundays and moveable feasts in the year.

If then all other things in the Christian Church and in the Book of God thus evidently point to the Cross, ought not our lives, all of them, to point also the same way? Our Saviour had it never out of His mind, from His first human thought unto the actual moment of His giving up the Ghost. Shall we, His followers and servants, think it enough to remember His Cross only just for this one week of the year? Nay, my brethren, it may not be. We know that our Lord's true and faithful servant, S. Paul, made up his mind to know but one thing, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Wherever he went, whatever he did, Christ crucified was never far from his thoughts. He

not only looked that way, not only meditated much on his Lord going up the hill with the Cross upon His Shoulders, but he actually made it his business, and his comfort too, to follow Him, to bear his own cross after Him. So must each one of us do, if we would truly partake of the true Tree of Life. Each one of us is even now employed or ought to be in humbling his own heart, in praying for and practising deep and true contrition for his many sins and negligences, since last Easter, and all his life before. Whatever you suffer in this sad, but necessary work, whatever God lays upon you, whatever earthly satisfaction you see good to deny yourself, in order to repent the better: let me beseech you, as well as you can, to fasten and connect it all on to the Cross of Christ, the true Tree of Life. Beseech your good Saviour graciously to accept all the bitter thoughts which the remembrance of past sin brings with it, and all the shame and pain of confessing it, either to Him, or to His Priests; all the languor and weariness of your fasting (if you are able to fast); all the mortification and annoyance you feel in giving up your own will in any respect: as well as all the bodily pain and anguish of spirit, which He brings on you Himself by His chastisements. Bring it all, along with your sins, to the foot of His Cross: beseech Him to take it all from you in good part, and make the best of it for you in your great unworthiness, joining it all, as He knows how, to that only true and precious Sacrifice, which He offered once for all, in all our behalf, and which in every Communion He presents solemnly before His Father. Unite all your sorrows, by true penitence, to the sorrows of your Saviour. It

is the greatest mercy, that He permits you to do so. Sorrows you must have. It would be strange indeed, if it were otherwise. Nay, one would be almost ashamed to go through life, if one could, without care or grief, when we think of what He endured; and surely as sinners, it must put us to great shame, to recollect the agony, the scourging, the thorny crown, the nailing to the Cross, and yet to find ourselves shrinking from every little trouble and self-denial, which we might endure for His sake.

Behold, the Tree of Life is in the midst of the garden, and we, happier than fallen Adam in Paradise, are permitted and invited, even after all our sins, to put forth our hand and take of it, and live for ever. But behold also, the Tree of Knowledge of evil, as before, still stands beside it. We alas! too many of us, have wilfully tasted of that Tree already. God grant we may be undoing the mischief by the medicine of true penitence: but let us of all things beware that we taste not of it again; that we knowingly taste no forbidden pleasure any more, as long as we live. Is this a hard saying? Nay, surely it will be a far harder one, should we be told at last to depart out of this our Paradise, with no hope of ever returning; with the sword of God's anger again flaming between us and the tree of life. Why should you so much mind the trifling pain of turning away from wrong things for your blessed Saviour's sake, whereas He freely submitted to all pain, to have you delivered from those very things—from the shame of them here, and the curse hereafter?

SERMON LIV.

OLD TESTAMENT TYPES OF THE CROSS. II.

THE WOOD OF ISAAC'S SACRIFICE.

TUESDAY.

GEN. xxii. 6.

“ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son.”

THE tree of Life in the midst of the garden was, as I pointed out yesterday, a type and shadow of our Saviour's Cross, as in other respects, so especially in this: that it *did* stand in the midst: all around had respect unto it: even as Christ Crucified is all in all, both *to*, and *with* His Church. There was also a type of the Cross in the time of Noah, in that he and the rest, who were saved from the Flood, were saved by an Ark of Wood, floating on the water, as we Christians are saved by the Cross and Baptism. This, however, I only just mention: intending this evening to go on to another type, which the Holy Spirit hath made known, in something which happened a great many years after. The wood on which Isaac was sacrificed was no doubt intended for a figure and representation of the Cross.

In order to have a right notion of this matter, we may draw, in our own minds a picture of a very lonely

hill, the hill of Moriah. It was afterwards, and is now, a part of Jerusalem; but in Abraham's time, it was apparently very lonely indeed; no houses, nor buildings, nor any one living on it. Towards this mountain you are to imagine, that you see a party of persons travelling. There is an old man, a very old man, a hundred and twenty-five years of age: and he is the chief person in the company. He has with him three young men: two of them his servants, the third his son, now twenty-five years of age; born by miracle, when his father was an hundred years old, and his mother ninety: his only son, and of course unspeakably dear to him. They have with them an ass laden with wood and other materials and instruments of sacrifice; and so they have travelled together for two days. On the third day, the company divides itself: Abraham sees at a distance a place which he points out to his servants, telling them, he and the lad would go yonder and worship: but they must stay below with the ass, until he returned. And now take especial notice of what next happens. Abraham takes the wood of the burnt offering, and lays it on Isaac his son: and he takes the fire in his hand, and a knife, and they go both of them together. We seem to see these two, the father and the son, going up the hill, apart from all the world besides; and we are permitted to hear some of their conversation. Isaac speaks unto Abraham his father, and says, "My father:" and he says, "Here am I, my son: and he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" What should the father say to this, seeing that he had it in command from God to offer this very son himself for a burnt-

offering? Surely it was enough to break his heart, when Isaac simply said to him, "My father," in that loving and confiding way. How *could* he bear it, when his son went on to ask about the victim? Yet Abraham did bear it: he answered calmly, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." Abraham overcame his paternal feelings: he could speak calmly, and with settled purpose of heart, even about slaying his only son with his own hand on the Altar. Was it that Abraham was a hard-hearted person? that his bowels did not yearn upon his son? Nay, the Scripture holds him out to us, as the very pattern of Fatherhood. It was very grievous to him to part even with Ishmael, how much more with this child of promise, the only son of his wife Sarah! Abraham's heart was breaking, we may be sure. Nevertheless he did not at all flinch, he was still purposed to slay his son. So they went both of them together till they came to the place which God had told him of: and then Isaac was made acquainted with the truth: that he was himself the lamb for the burnt-offering. Isaac meekly submitted to it: there was great faith in him also; but before I go on to that, I must say a word or two more of Abraham's faith: for it was greater, even than we have said. As S. Paul shews in the eleventh of Hebrews, it was not merely a father offering his son, but it was that father to whom the promise had been made, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Isaac was given to Abraham, on purpose that through him Abraham's seed might be greatly multiplied. Yet now, Abraham was to put Isaac, having as yet no child, to death. It might seem, as if God were calling upon

Abraham to do that which would make all His prophecies void. Yet Abraham had such faith, that he went on and obeyed God, in despite of all appearances, all misgivings. God put into his heart to think, that after death there might be a resurrection: and in that hope, or in any case in his earnest wish to please God, Abraham, as much as in him lay, offered up his only begotten son.

But see also the faith of Isaac. He was now, it is thought, twenty-four or twenty-five years old, in the strong active time of his life, and might easily, so far, have refused to suffer, and have broken away from his father Abraham. But no: Isaac too had faith, very great faith and obedience: and he chose at all events to submit himself to the will of God, come what would of it. He asked no questions, he made no resistance, but quietly allowed his father to bind him and lay him on the Altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

Stop here, my brethren, and consider the greater things which this history plainly teaches: the second meaning, hidden under the veil. Imagine yourselves still in the same place, on the slope of Mount Moriah, only rather more than two thousand years afterwards. Behold another and a much larger company is going up the same hill, and, in the midst of them, One like unto Isaac, the Child of Promise, the only Son both of His Father and His Mother. It is our Lord bearing His Cross: like Isaac, He is bearing the Wood, which He is presently to be sacrificed upon. He bears it freely and willingly, of His own accord: they indeed, the cruel executioners, thrust

it upon Him with all barbarity and violence: they think He cannot resist them: but if Isaac, from his youth and strength, had power to resist Abraham if he would, how much more might the Lord and Judge of all have swept them away in a moment "with one rough word," even as the night before, merely by His saying, "I am He," they had been all smitten to the ground. But as Isaac meekly obeyed Abraham, so neither would our Lord put forth His strength against His persecutors. For "He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and for this cause did He come into the world, that He might lay down His life upon the Cross which He is now bearing. He had said to His Father long ago, even before His Incarnation^a, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a Body hast Thou prepared Me:" "Burnt offerings and offerings for sin, hast Thou not required: then said I, Lo, I come, to do Thy Will, O God: I am content to do it: Thy law is within My Heart." Yes, Christian men, women and children, know for certain that each one of you was within our Saviour's Heart from the moment of His awful Incarnation: you were in His Heart, that He might live and die for you: He bore you in mind, He never forgot one. It was His Father's Will and His own, meekly to take on His Divine Shoulders the Wood on which He was to be sacrificed, and to bear it up the hill. It was His Father's Will and His own, that when He was come to the place called Calvary, the Cross which He had borne should be prepared for Him to be fastened to it, as the wood which Isaac bore was builded into an Altar and laid in order. It was His

^a Ps. xl. 8-10, add Heb. x. 5.

Father's Will and His own, that the three cruel nails, one by one, should be driven through His tender Body into the Wood, one through His right Hand, another through His left Hand, and the third through both His Feet, which were placed one above the other: and so He was made fast to the Cross, His Altar, as Isaac had been made fast by the far less cruel bonds, wherewith Abraham bound him, and had been laid upon the wood.

So far our Lord's Sacrifice was plainly represented by the sacrifice of Isaac: but there were two remarkable differences, which I will now mention. Isaac, as far as we are told, bore his cross, I mean the wood on which he was to be sacrificed, alone. Abraham laid it on him, and he carried it at once up the hill. But our Lord sank down under His Cross: it pleased Him so to give way to the faintness and pain, caused by so much loss of blood as He had suffered; and whereas they then laid hold on one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming, as it seemed accidentally, out of the country, and laid the Cross on him, that he might bear it after Jesus: this seems to shew that our Lord's Passion differed from Isaac's and from the sufferings of all other men, in a very wonderful and mysterious way: namely: His willing that we should all partake of it. He suffered indeed *for* us all, yet so, as that we all should more or less suffer with Him. He and His Cross meet us all, whether we will or no, on our way through this world, as He then met Simon on his way into Jerusalem. And He graciously permits and invites us, if we will, to hasten up to Him, and offer to assist Him, and to bear, if we might, some part of His load. For instance, at

this time of Lent and Holy Week, He calls on us to think much of His Sufferings. The Church, from our youth up, has put our Lord and His Cross in our way. At this time especially she makes us hear Him, calling to us, "Is it nothing to you, O all ye who pass by? Attend, and see if there be any sorrow, like unto My Sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger" at your sins. "Is it nothing to you?" Will you be still hastening on into the city, about your earthly and bodily concerns, buying and selling and getting gain, marrying and giving in marriage, eating and drinking, working and playing, and not staying your course for one moment to assist Me in bearing this heavy burthen for you?" Thus our Lord seems silently to call on each one of us, as we meet Him, at this holy season, toiling up the hill under His Cross. And if you say, "How can we do anything? Simon the Cyrenian, being on the spot, might hasten to our Lord, and lovingly and reverently support Him; but what can we do?" know for a certainty that He counts it supporting Him, if you do but try to meditate earnestly and lovingly upon Him, until you have begun to grieve in your heart for your own many sins, which have helped to cause His sad agony. Much more, if He see you, for His sake, forcing yourself away from those sins, and from the temptations and occasions, which as you know put you most in danger of them. And again, He counts it support, and great support, when you try to do Simon the Cyrenian's part to some poor needy afflicted person, who has a cross of his own, and is sinking under it. Such are all members of Him: their crosses are

His Crosses; they who relieve them relieve Him. Make haste, then, and run in, and put your shoulder to the burthen, wherever you see any one in trouble, and something within tells you, that you may help them for Jesus' sake. He is there, though you see Him not. He will not forget it, when the time comes to number the cups of cold water, the slight services done to His little ones, because they belong to Him.

One more point of difference there was, and a very great one, between Isaac's sacrifice, and our Saviour's; that His was completed, whereas Isaac's was not. Abraham did but stretch forth his hand and take the knife to slay his son: but the Eternal Father's will was to permit the Eternal Son really to die, to endure all the pangs of death. Because our Lord was to be our true Sacrifice; Isaac, only the example and shadow of the same. No Angel called from heaven, when Jesus was on the Cross, to turn the death away from Him: there was no other victim, as the ram caught in a thicket by its horns, to be offered up for a burnt-offering in His stead. It was a winepress, which He only could tread, a load which He only could bear: and for our sakes He bore it all, He permitted the last drop of His Sacred Blood to be forced and wrung out: He kept back nothing from us. And *we*, what have we given, what are we even now giving to Him? The shreds and remnants of our time? the dregs of our decayed being? a few minutes of seeming prayer, after whole days given to the world and the flesh? an hour in Church, after a whole week spent with mammon? the leavings of our tables, the odds and ends of our purses, a good word now and then, in the midst of corrupt or

slandrous talk? Is this all we have for Him, Who emptied Himself of His Glory for us?

Abraham's hand was stayed, and he, with Isaac, returned home in peace, and both lived happily to a good old age. And so it often happens; when some great affliction was at hand, God's merciful Providence withholds His Angel from smiting. Many of us, no doubt, can recollect such gracious deliverances: all may very well imagine them: and all may very well understand, how dearly they are bound to love Him, Who, by not delivering Himself, purchased for us these and all other blessings. And if the blow comes, how should we not then also be supported and comforted? For, whatever it be, it is a part of His Cross, and our trying to be patient is in a way helping Him to bear it. And if we help Him to bear His Cross, be sure He will never let us sink under ours.

SERMON LV.

OLD TESTAMENT TYPES OF THE CROSS. III.

THE ROD OF MOSES.

WEDNESDAY.

Ex. iv. 17.

“And thou shalt take this Rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.”

THE tree of life in Paradise betokens the Cross, as being that, whereon He hangeth, Who is our only Life: of whom Christians are invited to eat, and live for ever. Again, the wood, which was carried by Isaac up the hill, betokens the Cross, as being that which He Who should be our Sacrifice bore on His Shoulders up Mount Calvary, being afterwards Himself to be borne by it and offered upon it. And now we will think of another thing, of which we read a good deal farther on in the Bible. The *Rod of Moses* is also a great type of the Cross. For as Moses by his rod overcame the Lord's enemies, and delivered his people from bondage, so did Jesus Christ by His Cross: and that, not only once for all, in the beginning of His Kingdom, but also day by day continually, for the good of each one of us. Let us then, for this evening's meditation, consider some part of what Scripture tells us concerning this wonder-working Rod of Moses. Perhaps by God's mercy we may find

some instruction, how to use our Saviour's Cross, wherein we have a portion as Christians, to our own good.

The first mention of Moses' Rod is in the fourth chapter of Exodus, where God is discoursing with him out of the burning bush in Mount Sinai. Moses, as a shepherd, had a rod or staff in his hand: and when he said, "The Israelites will not believe me," the Lord appointed him that rod, wherewith he should work various wonders in their sight, and so convince them that God had sent him, and encourage them to put themselves under his care. Yet the Rod in itself was but a common piece of wood. No more was our Lord's saving Cross, which afterwards Almighty God used for the Redemption of the whole world and entire discomfiture of His people's enemies. In itself it had no virtue; but as an engine of Divine power, it could do all things. And we may observe that all its virtue was given it by the Lord appearing in the Bush. Now this appearing in the Bush is the token of Christ's wonderful Incarnation, how that our poor frail human nature became the abode of the Most High God, and, instead of being consumed and brought to nothing by His intimate Presence, was ennobled and blessed and glorified to that infinite degree, that, as the Creed of S. Athanasius says, it was even "taken into God." I say then, as the Rod had its virtue from the Lord appearing in the Bush, so the Cross hath its saving power from the Incarnate Godhead of Him Who hangeth thereon. He saves us by it, and by it He puts down our enemies, because He is God and Man, suffering and dying for us upon it. Remember this, Christian brethren, in

all your thoughts, at this awful time. Remember that He Who suffers, although He is true Man (else He could not have suffered) is also Very and Eternal God; and fear and tremble before Him accordingly.

This Rod is turned in the first place into a serpent, and Moses flies from before it: because the Cross is naturally the punishment of sin and the portion of sinners, and any one would naturally shrink from it. Nay even our gracious Redeemer, Who had devoted Himself from the first to bear it, felt His Soul, as the time drew on, "exceeding sorrowful even unto death," and prayed to His Father that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. So when any one of us is bidden to take hold of the Cross, to join with our Lord in any self-denial or suffering, we of course should be glad to draw back; we feel as if it were a serpent, as if there were enmity between us and it. But let us, at God's bidding, courageously put forth our hands and lay hold of it, and it will turn again to a rod; instead of destroying, it will support and guide us.

The next thing is, God directs the Prophet, as in the text, to take the wonderful Rod in his hand, when he sets forth on his errands to the Israelites and to Pharaoh. "Take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." That is, both Christ Himself and His ministers should do all their wonders in the way of the Cross. Christ Himself did, in a manner, bear the Cross all His life long. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," all the while that He went about doing good. He sighed and wept, and groaned in the Spirit and was troubled, in the very act of healing the worst infirmities, and

raising the dead to life. And His ministers as they go about in His Name, must also bear the cross in His Name. Even as one of the holiest of them, long ago declared to His people, “^a I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” And all pictures of our Lord in His Glory, represent Him, as you know, with the Cross in His Hands; because the Cross is that, by which He reigns, and by which His ministers prevail. Thus Moses, going to speak in God’s Name to the children of Israel and to Pharaoh, was a type of Jesus Christ first, and afterwards of His Church, coming to all men with the message and power of the Cross.

But what are the great things to be done by this mean-looking and simple rod, which the shepherd of the Lord’s flock bears in his hand? It is the driving away their enemies, and punishing them by the fearful miracles which we call the Plagues of Egypt: and it is also the making a way for His chosen people out of Egypt, and helping them afterwards through the frightful wilderness. The Rod of God was the outward and visible token, by means whereof all these wonders were wrought. When the water was to be turned into blood, Moses and Aaron lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river. The water became blood by the same power which even now is present in Holy Baptism, to make the Water, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, effectual to wash away sin in the Blood of Jesus Christ. When the swarms of frogs were to be brought up out of the river, then again Aaron’s hand was to be stretched out with his rod: and so when the dust of the

^a 1 Cor. ii. 2.

land was to become lice, Aaron's rod is particularly mentioned: as if a holy Priest or Bishop were to excommunicate some wicked country in the Name of Christ crucified, and heavy scourges were to ensue. Again in the last and worst of the plagues of Egypt, when the whole land was desolated with hail, when locusts were to be called over it, still the rod of Moses was used. Surely we are to understand by this, that the effectual weapon for a Christian to use against all the enemies of his soul is no other than our Lord's Cross. We are to hold up the remembrance of His Passion against the world, the flesh, and the devil, against the sins that come nearest to hurt us: and we shall come off more than conquerors.

But more especially may a Christian discern, in type and shadow, the virtue of his Saviour's Cross, in that wonderful history which we hope to hear next Sunday, the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea. When that sea was to be divided, for the people to pass through, as on dry land, God said, "Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it." And in the morning again, Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength, and the waters returned, and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh, there remained not so much as one of them. What is this, but the Cross of Christ, making a way for His chosen, through the waters of the New Birth, and overwhelming their spiritual enemies in the same? So that if the young child die, before he commit actual sin, he is, as the Church teaches, undoubtedly saved. The Evil one, with all his followers, can no more come near that

child to harm him, than Pharaoh and his armies, being drowned in the Red Sea, could rise up to hurt the Israelites on their way. And as a token, that this is all done by the power of our Saviour's Cross, the Priest, we know, at the time of our Baptism, made the sign of the Cross on our foreheads, and bade us go on and fight manfully against sin, the world, and the devil: as Moses, stretching out his rod, bade the children of Israel go on through the midst of the sea.

Once again, on their way through the wilderness, we find the rod in Moses' hand, working wondrously; and again it works in such a way, as to shew us plainly, that it is the type of the Holy Cross. The Israelites are thirsty, and there is no water to drink: Moses is commanded to take his rod, wherewith he smote the river, and to smite the rock, and bring water out of it for them. The Rod helped them to a strange and miraculous drink: and does not the Cross help us continually to the spiritual drink of Christ's Blood in Holy Communion? His Side, pierced on the Cross, is as that Rock smitten by Moses, which was the fountain of strengthening and refreshing to the children of Israel.

Thus, from beginning to end, we see that as the Rod of Moses was the instrument of Israel's deliverance, so is Christ's Cross the instrument of our redemption. And so it must be from the beginning to the end of our lives. The thought and remembrance of the Cross is that which will help us above all other to get the better of the enemies of our souls. The Christians of old time made much of the outward sign itself. They used it, as the Jews did the

words of their Law, on all occasions of any consequence ; at going out and coming in, at sitting down and rising up. If we use the outward sign only that once at our Baptism, yet have we the same need as our forefathers had of the thing meant and intended by that outward sign. We have the same need as they had of calling to mind continually the Passion of our Lord. We priests need it in our dealings with you, Christ's people ; and you, Christ's people, need it continually in your dealings with your own consciences. Is not a priest, when he goes about the Parish warning one man of grievous sin, and encouraging and forwarding another in good ways, is he not a little like Moses, now contending against Pharaoh, now opening the way for the Israelites through the water ? And if Moses could do neither of these things without the Rod of God, his ordained instrument, of course neither can we do any thing for you, nor you for yourselves, without the Cross, without remembrance of the Passion of Christ.

For only just consider, my brethren. When the world is strong upon you ; when, for example, you know what your duty is, but know also that you will be laughed at for doing it ; would it not be a great thing for you to recall to mind the Cross, and what happened round it ? You are full of false shame, you are childishly afraid of the scorn and ridicule of certain companions of yours, very clever perhaps and amusing, so that you can scarcely help laughing with them yourselves ; and it seems to you an intolerable thing, to be mocked and derided by them : and so you give up religious duties, or join in profane jokes, or otherwise encourage sin. But suppose, at the moment

you were so tempted, Almighty God were suddenly to open your eyes, and shew you, as in a kind of miraculous vision, our Lord and Saviour hanging upon the Cross, and the Scribes and Pharisees jeering round Him, I am sure it would make you afraid and ashamed to go on caring for the laughter of your foolish companions. You would say at once, "I must take His part, and not theirs." So it would be, if we could actually see such a vision. And so, by His grace, it will be, if, although we cannot see it, we yet force ourselves to think earnestly on it. Thinking earnestly on the Cross is carrying it about with you in your mind, as Moses carried the rod of God in his hand. And as he by so doing prevailed against Pharaoh and the Egyptians, so you, by recollecting the Cross, may prevail, if you will, against the devil, and against the temptations which now seem too mighty for you.

Therefore, I beseech you, whatever you do, suffer not these blessed days of Holy Week and Easter to pass away, without laying up a treasure of meditations on the wonders which now happened, such as may be always at hand, when temptations and trials come on. Think much and deeply on our Lord's deadly pangs of the Body: figure to yourself His Sacred Hands and Feet pierced through and through by the cruel nails, and the whole weight of His Limbs hanging on those Wounds: and make a resolution, with prayer, to think of that pain, the next time you are tempted to any sin of the flesh. *That* will be holding up the Cross for a weapon against foul and evil desire, as Moses held up his rod against the evil ways of Egypt: and be sure the

Cross will not be held up in vain. If you have any great and hard work to do for God, the great and hard work, perhaps, of making a general examination and confession, for the first time, of the sins of your whole life, the great and hard work of thorough repentance, and amendment; let not the devil frighten you by saying, "It is no use trying; it is too hard." Nay, stretch the rod over the sea, and you will find the waters divide. Take up the Cross in earnest, not only in wish and fancy, but in actual obedience; take it up and shew it to the Evil one, and say, "By this sign, so please God, I will overcome thee." Think deeply on what was done for you this week, and help yourself by such thoughts to real self-denial. Do this again and again; do it continually; and see if you be not delivered. Keep Good Friday in mind all the year, and you will have a blessed Easter at last.

SERMON LVI.

OLD TESTAMENT TYPES OF THE CROSS. IV.

THE UPLIFTED HANDS.

THURSDAY.

Ex. xvii. 11.

“It came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.”

I SHALL endeavour to set before you this evening a very special type of the Cross, taken, as was that of yesterday, from the history of Moses, that man of God, the pattern of our Lord in His office of Prophet and Mediator. I shewed you yesterday, how the great things which he wrought by his rod to deliver God's people were tokens of the far greater things which Jesus Christ would work by the power of His Cross to deliver us sinners from the world, the flesh, and the devil. But that shepherd's Rod was not the only outward and visible sign of the Cross, which God gave His ancient people. Very soon after they had passed through the Red Sea, and were on their way through the dry and barren wilderness, they came to a place where was water; but the water, as often happens in those sandy countries, was bitter and brackish, so that they could not drink it. This they

thought very hard : and they murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink ? And he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet. This was the very first trouble that happened to them after their great deliverance from Egypt. And how did God bring them through it ? By a Tree. If you would know, how that Tree was the sign of the Cross, go and make enquiry of some troubled and afflicted Christian, some one who has tried to be devout in the midst of his troubles, and ask him what he found the best and only medicine, the surest support. He will tell you, the Cross of Christ; the power and virtue of our Lord's saving Passion. He will tell you that, in all his pain and grief and restlessness, he found nothing effectual to soothe and compose him, apart from the remembrance of Christ on the bitter Cross. Looking unto Jesus enabled him to be patient : the Cross sweetened the bitter waters. Thus you may understand, how what happened at Marah was but the type and figure of what happens daily in many a sick room, many a disturbed and broken heart. God's people are troubled ; they cry to their Moses, i. e. to him whom God has given to be their Pastor ; their Pastor cries to the Lord, and the Lord shews him a tree, i. e. the Cross, which he casts into the bitter waters, and they are sweetened. By the ministry and sacraments of the Holy Church God gives His afflicted ones more and more communion with Jesus Christ crucified, and so the Cross is cast into the water, and it becomes sweet ; the man would rather have the trouble than not, because it brings him nearer the Passion of his Saviour.

If what happened at Marah was thus a clear sign of the consoling virtue of the Cross in time of affliction, that which I am now going to speak of, was a sign no less clear and evident of its triumphant and victorious power in aid of prayer against temptation. For thus it was. Not so very long after this miracle of the tree at Marah, certainly within six weeks after it, the children of Israel, being in Rephidim, where Moses for the first time had smitten the rock and brought out water for them to drink, the Amalekites, a fierce people of the desert, children of Esau, came cruelly and suddenly upon them, when they were faint and weary with thirst and long travelling, and smote the hindmost of them, even all that were feeble behind them; the old men, perhaps, the sick, the women and the children. Such as those the Amalekites cruelly smote, because they had no fear of God ^a. Now this was a figure and type of what is sure to happen, sooner or later, to us all as members of Christ, on our way, after Baptism, through the wilderness of this world. Some violent overpowering temptation is almost sure to come upon us. What shall we do? How shall we meet it? Observe how the Israelites did, when Amalek fell upon them. They met the enemy in two ways. Part of them, under Joshua, went out to the actual battle: but Moses went up to the top of the hill with the Rod of God in his hand. No doubt, he went up to pray: but observe how he prayed. First, he had the Rod of God in his hand: that is particularly set down. He went not up without the sign of the Cross. Next, there was something very particular, regarding the posture

^a Deut. xxv. 18.

wherein he prayed. He stood on the hill with his hands stretched out, the one on the one side and the other on the other side: i. e. he stood upright in the same posture wherein our Lord was nailed to the Cross. Now you know this would be very tiring, if it were continued for any length of time: and so it came to pass, that Moses' hands were heavy, and he could not of himself hold them up. Aaron, therefore, his own brother, and Hur, who is said have been the husband of Miriam, and therefore his brother-in-law, stayed up his hands, the one on the right, and the other on the left: and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

But why was it an object with them to keep up Moses' hands in that particular posture? Because they found, that when he so held up his hand, Israel prevailed: but when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. Clearly it was not his praying only; for he might pray, of course, just as well and as earnestly without holding his hands in that particular posture. And what could that posture mean, but the sign of the Cross, as the old Fathers always believed? The enemies of Israel prevailed, until that sign was used against them: and whenever it ceased to be used, they prevailed again. And because at last a way was found for persevering in the use of that sign, Amalek was entirely defeated and smitten down; Joshua and Israel discomfited it with the edge of the sword.

Such is the history. Now let us consider what all this is to us. And to make it out the more plainly, let us look at Moses first, as the type of our Lord, then as an example or pattern to each individual

among ourselves: to each Christian in the care of his own soul.

First, Moses going up to the top of the hill, and there standing all day long with his arms stretched out in the form of a Cross, is like our Saviour on Mount Calvary, for three long hours stretching out His Hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people: as saith the Prophet Esaias. And whereas Israel could not prevail, until Moses began to lift up his hand in that way; we know that for the whole time under the Law, and before the Law, the world lay in wickedness, and was "carnal, sold under sin," and not able to prevail against the devil and his angels. The few, who could do anything in that way, did it by looking onward, in the might of the Cross which was to come. But when our Saviour had gone up the Hill, and offered His perfect Sacrifice on the Cross, then the time of the Law went by, and men had strength to please God and keep His commandments, overcoming all the snares and assaults of the devil: as Christ Himself told His disciples: "Now is the judgement of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." And ever since then our victory has continued, because His Sacrifice has continued. Although He have loosed for ever the pains of death, and can no more be holden of it, yet is His Sacrifice continued, in virtue and meaning, by His continual intercession in Heaven. He is there night and day at His Father's Right Hand, pleading for us, and offering on our behalf the perpetual memory of His precious death. The awful Sacrifice in Holy Communion is but the Church on earth taking her part

^b S. John xii. 31.

and assisting at this continual Sacrifice which her Lord is ever making for her in Heaven. “^c He is able therefore to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Their victory depends on His perpetual Intercession. His Hands never tire of representing the Cross to His Father: therefore His Church never fails, and His sheep never perish.

So far I have considered Moses as the type of our Lord, first crucified, then pleading for us in perpetual memory of His Cross. Now let us reflect, how that Moses is also a pattern and example to each particular Christian, in his prayers more especially. As long as Moses prayed without the sign of the Cross, so long his prayer seemed vain. If our prayers very often seem vain and without fruit, may it not be that we do not heartily offer them in the Name of Jesus Christ? The Church indeed warns us continually to do so, teaching us in the end of almost every collect to say the words, “Through Jesus Christ our Lord.” As often as we say those words thoughtfully, meaning what we say, we do in God’s sight make the true sign of the Cross; we plead, as members of Christ; our prayers are His Prayers. Offered thoughtfully, with a penitent and obedient heart, they *cannot* but bear fruit; they *cannot* possibly return to us without a blessing. But the misfortune is, our so often permitting ourselves to say the Holy Name, without thinking of it. If we say, it is hard to attend, we have many worldly matters to draw off our minds, no doubt this is quite true: but have we ever tried in earnest to cure the infirmity? When Moses found

^c Heb. vii. 25.

his hands growing weary, he procured the help of his two brethren, to hold them up, on each side of him. Have you ever taken counsel beforehand, how you might prevent your sad distractions in prayer? how you might always think of Christ crucified, when you ask God to hear you for His sake? Have you prayed to pray better? Have you cut off what you properly could of your worldly cares and anxieties, that you might have less upon your mind to hinder your prayers from prevailing? Do this as well as you can: make the sign of the Cross in your heart; i.e., think earnestly of Christ crucified, when you ask a favour in His Name, and sooner or later you will find your prayer is heard.

But take notice of another thing. Moses' hands waxed very weary, yet he persevered in his waiting on God. It was real bodily distress to him, but he did not therefore leave off. And good Christians before now have been so far from leaving out their prayers and duties, because it was some hardship to fulfil them properly, that they have even used some harsh dealing, some roughness towards their own bodies, to keep their souls awake, that they might pray the better. And indeed, we may well imagine, how foolish, how false, our devotions must seem to the Holy Angels watching over us, when we call on God continually in the name of Christ crucified, and yet shrink, in our own lives and ways, from all kinds of taking up the Cross, all acts of mortification and self-denial. Much more, if we think to reconcile our prayers with any kind of deadly sin; with uncleanness, lying, cheating, pride, sloth, or greediness. That would be, as if some one in the camp of the

Amalekites were to think he could prevail with God, by merely putting himself in the same posture with Moses, being all the while not on God's side, but against Him. Wherefore putting away from us, in purpose of heart, first of all our wilful deadly sins, and then our too great softness and slothfulness of spirit, let us now go up with Moses to the top of the hill, i.e., let us, in this Season at least, go with our Lord up to Mount Calvary, and conform ourselves, as we may, to His awful and blessed Sacrifice; let us put ourselves, so to speak, into the same posture with Him. If we cannot stretch out our arms, as Moses did, all day long, yet let us endeavour humbly to fix our hearts upon Him, to love Him for His unspeakable love, to bear our own burthens, light or heavy, with entire patience for His sake. Let us so dwell upon His Passion, so make the sign of the Cross in our heart, that, at the end of all our prayers, we may really pray in His Name. Then shall we both prevail with God to bless us with victory in the end, and (what will help us more than any one thing to pass through life in Christian comfort and quietness) the Evil one, finding us always ready to meet him with the sign and Name of our Lord, will, we may hope, cease from tempting us, and attack others who are less on their guard: as the Amalekites, discomfited by the sign of Moses stretching out his arms, let the Israelites alone for the rest of their march. A great reward of a very little faith and patience! And who knows how near we may come to it, how much spiritual quiet and strength we may ensure for the rest of our days, if we will but do our endeavour to keep this one holy season, as well as ever we *can* keep it?

SERMON LVII.

OLD TESTAMENT TYPES OF THE CROSS. V.

THE SERPENT OF BRASS.

GOOD FRIDAY.

S. JOHN iii. 14, 15.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

HERE we have our Lord's own words for the meaning of what had happened so long before in the wilderness. Though it had happened so long before, and seemed to the outward eye far enough from Jesus Christ and His doings, yet here He tells us Himself, that it had a great deal to do with Him. The former types we have interpreted, partly upon the authority of His Apostles, in the New Testament, partly upon that of the Church which came after, using the help which the Apostles had left it. But for this one of the brazen Serpent, we have His own word and authority. And it is well, that according to the order, in which we have considered the various types of the Cross, we come to this one upon Good Friday: so that we may hear our Saviour and Lord preaching upon it, now upon His own Day.

It was the first mention, as far as we read, that He ever made of His Cross. Of course it was always in His mind: He knew from His youth up all that should happen unto Him: nevertheless, the Gospel sets down no saying of His regarding the manner of His sufferings earlier than this one to Nicodemus. They two, our Lord and Nicodemus, were communing together by night, and our Lord had just been speaking of His own high and holy Nature, how that, being both God and Man, He was in heaven and earth at once: and then He goes on to speak of His work as our Saviour, and says that in order to save us He must be lifted up, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Our gracious Lord therefore seems to recommend this account of the brazen serpent as a special matter to think of on Good Friday. In turning our meditations that way, we seem to be following His guidance: and if we try to go on dutifully and humbly, may hope for His blessing.

First, we must go over in our minds the history, to which He was referring. We find it in the twenty-first chapter of Numbers. That generation of the children of Israel, which came with Moses out of Egypt, was now fast passing away; but their children, as they grew up, were too apt to murmur, and transgress as their fathers had done: and now they were vexed at not being led on the shortest way into Canaan. For certain reasons it was God's will to take them a long way round, and to keep them so much longer in the desert; and the soul of the people, we read, was much discouraged because of the way. So they began to murmur against God,

and against Moses: “^a Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water: and our soul loatheth this light bread.” They cared not for the Bread from Heaven, the Manna, nor for the Spiritual Rock, that followed them: they rather wished themselves back in Egypt, living upon ordinary bread and water: they slighted God’s mercy, and spake very profanely of His Gift: “Our soul loatheth this light bread;” and yet it was Angels’ food, provided miraculously to keep them alive in their distress. This was their sin: an earthly mind, leading them to profane and unthankful murmuring; a sort of temper which most of us, I fear, can but too easily understand. Indeed, in another form, it was much the same as the first sin of all, Adam’s sin and Eve’s, which caused all our misery. For Eve too sinned in giving ear to words of murmuring and profane ingratitude, when the devil whispered them to her: she was not satisfied, though she had Angels’ food, the fruit of the Tree of Life. This was the Israelites’ transgression: mark now their punishment. “^b The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” Those fiery serpents are creatures, which naturally and commonly inhabit that burning wilderness. Their coming on must have made all thoughtful persons in the camp feel, how merciful God had been in keeping them off all this while, and how ungrateful, to murmur so at Him. By thoughts like these, and by the distress and helplessness in which they found themselves, the rebellious people were turned to a

^a Num. xxi. 5.

^b Ib. 6.

better mind. They come to Moses, and say, “^cWe have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee: pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us.” And Moses prayed for the people. See, the first thing to get deliverance was to get Moses to intercede for them: and in order to this, they had to confess their sin, their evil speaking both against God and Moses. Moses prays for them: and the Lord makes known the remedy. “^dMake thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.” Observe, each one was to be cured separately, by applying to himself that, which was provided as a general cure for all. Observe also, what was that instrument of healing. It was made in the form of the very thing that caused the mischief. It was made in the likeness of one of the fiery serpents. And being made, it was lifted up, in the sight of the whole camp. And its virtue by God’s special gift was this, that it should heal all, yet not simply by being made, nor by being lifted up, but by each one looking towards it, after it had been made and lifted up. Moses, being thus bidden, made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, “^eand it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

This is the history, to which our Lord would have us look, as a help to think rightly of His Passion. This is the letter. Let us now look to the spirit of it.

The Israelites were bitten by fiery serpents. Do

^c Num. xxi. 7.

^d Ib. 8.

^e Ib. 9.

you not see, and alas ! do you not feel, that this is but a shadow of our natural condition ? For what is all sin, but a serpent, a fiery serpent ; a child and messenger of that Old Serpent, who tempted our forefathers, and would fain destroy us all ? And sin is a *fiery* Serpent, because of the fire of lust, which it causes to rage in us : and because of Hell-fire, by which it is already scorched, and which, if not checked, it will surely kindle upon us. Such then is our condition : we come into the world with adder's poison, as it were, in our veins : and as we pass through the world, there are fiery serpents all around us, temptations in sight and out of sight, constantly endeavouring to bite and wound us, and infuse their deadly corruption into our very hearts. And we, in our folly, too often go near these mortal enemies on purpose : we seek out temptation, and love to have it strong upon us : the very best of us is not always so guarded and watchful as he might be. What wonder, if we suffer frequent and very sore mischief, walking and lying down, day and night, in the midst of venomous snakes : so that with too many not an hour passes, little as they dream of it themselves, without their suffering some fresh wound of mortal sin.

Such is our condition, by evil nature, and often by worse habit : and we ought to pray God continually to give us a true notion of it : else we shall never fear it as we ought, nor love *Him* aright, Who this day delivered us from it.

But see now the manner of that deliverance, how it was shadowed out in the making and lifting up of the brazen serpent. I should not wonder, if it seem-

ed to those who were by, very strange, that the instrument of their healing should be made in the likeness of the very creature which had bitten them: as I have heard, and it seemed very strange to me, that when a man is bitten by a viper, part of that very viper is a good thing to apply to the wound. Very strange it must have seemed to them: but observe its spiritual meaning. The Son of God, when He came to save sinners, was to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh. He was to go about in His lifetime, a man among other men: and in His death, as this morning, He was to be numbered with the worst transgressors, bound and dragged along with the malefactors, and crucified between two thieves, as if He were the worst of the three. Thus, sinful flesh being the serpent that bites us, our Lord being made in the likeness of sinful flesh, was truly made in the likeness of that serpent: *in the likeness*, I say, of sinful flesh: not that He was Himself sinful flesh, God forbid: there was no touch of sin in His Human Nature, as there was no touch of poison in the serpent of brass: but, in all besides sin, He was one of us: and being so, He vouchsafed to be lifted up, as was that serpent of brass, for our healing.

He was lifted up first, eighteen hundred years ago, as a sacrifice is lifted on an Altar. For the Cross was verily indeed His Altar, on which He, being also our High Priest, offered up Himself to His Father. Those cruel and bloody executioners, when they had driven their nails through His Sacred Body into the Wood, and began to raise it up with Him hanging upon it, were but ministers, assisting Him in the work of His great and glorious Sacrifice; lifting Him

up, that He might be the cure of the whole world, sick as it was with all manner of sin and misery.

Again, He was then and is every day since lifted up, as a banner or ensign is lifted up on a tower or masthead, or any other high place, to make known something of consequence to all around. The Cross, it has been well said, was not only His Altar, but His Pulpit also, from which He preaches to all but the wilfully hardened all manner of Divine lessons. He is lifted up, that His Father may graciously accept Him as a Sacrifice for us: He is lifted up, that we may dutifully and humbly look to Him, and to Him alone, and know Him for our only Saviour.

We are to look unto Him: that is our part: as He saith by the Prophet Isaiah, “^f Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.” Why was the brazen serpent reared upon its pole? For the children of Israel, when they were bitten, to look to. They turned themselves towards it, and the very sight was their cure. In like manner, Why is the Son of Man lifted up? “That whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have everlasting life.” He is lifted up to all who are bitten by sin, i. e., to the whole race of Adam. He is lifted up to the heathen and unbaptized, that they, turning in earnest to Him, may believe and come near and be made members of Him, and so, being justified by faith, may have peace with God through Him. He is lifted up to us who are baptized, that we may keep on looking towards Him. We have need to do so, since the danger continues: the fiery serpents, tempting messengers of

^f Is. xlv. 22.

Satan, are round us on every side. If we turn away from Him, we are bitten directly, and too often with a mortal wound; with one or more of those deadly sins, in which if we die, it is impossible for us to be saved. What if this has already happened? Still the remedy is the same. We must look again to Him: for His blessed Cross (who can ever thank Him worthily?) is lifted up for the sincere penitent also: even as we may suppose that if any among those Israelites had been stung by a fiery serpent more than once, a second, a third, or any number of times, his remedy would still be, to lift his eyes to the brazen Serpent. It might not be so easy, his body might be more languid, and his mind more out of heart, so that it might have become ever so difficult for him to turn himself that way. Still it would be his only cure, and wherever it was really applied, it would be a certain cure. So is it with penitents, as concerning our Lord lifted up, as on this day, amongst us. However deep and grievous a person's old sins may have been, however sad and fearful his relapses, there is virtue in Jesus Christ crucified to heal him entirely, if he look up with all his heart. Only let him observe that this saying, *with all his heart*, is a hard and painful saying: harder and more painful, the longer he has gone on in sin: it is a point on which a person may easily deceive himself, and more easily, the oftener he has relapsed. By these thoughts, my penitent brethren, let us keep ourselves humble and watchful. But God forbid, we should doubt for a moment, the power or will of Him Who died for us to-day, to save us to the very uttermost, truly coming to God by Him, greatly as some of us may have,

ere now, abused our privileges. This history of the serpent has special comfort for such. For the Israelites who were healed by it had been sinning against very special favours from God. Their murmurings are the very image of our ill-behaviour towards Christ in His Church and Sacraments. Yet they were healed, on looking to the type of the Cross: and we shall be healed, doubt not, on our looking to the Cross itself. Look to it, for help, whenever you are tempted now, and then you may look to it in hope for pardon of what is gone and past. If you look in earnest, you will not look in vain.

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed;
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ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA

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